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PRESENTING
THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

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THE DYNAMIC MINISTRY

HEARTH AND ALTAR

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY

RINGING REALITIES

PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

By

OSCAR L. JOSEPH, Litt. D.

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FOREWORD

THIS book deals with the principles and practices of evangelism. It is the outcome of lecture-conferences with preachers in different parts of the country, of my own pastoral work, and of observations of church life in many localities. It is published in response to requests from clergy and laity.

My thanks are here expressed to publishers for permission to quote from their publications. This is acknowledged where the quotations are made.

O. L. J.

CHAPTER ONE

SPIRITUAL MORALE

THE spirit of any age affects all its institutions and activities. There is no isle of independence to which any could resort to escape its influence. For better or worse we belong to our own times and we have to reckon with the good and the evil in an attempt fully to understand our times and to meet its needs. One phase of the situation is aptly described by John Galsworthy in his preface to *A Modern Comedy:* "An age which knows not what it wants, yet is intensely preoccupied with getting it, must evoke a smile, if rather a sad one." This is said with irony and not cynicism, and he shows little of the unrelieved pessimism of writers like Krutch in *The Modern Temper* and Spengler in *The Decline of the West.* A modified optimism or rather meliorism is shown by Sperry in *Signs of These Times.* He pleads for a wisdom which is "the substance of our second thoughts about the past and of our long thoughts for the future." He concludes his survey with the high note of hope:

"We are living at a time when we seem to be on the verge of discovering new and greater truths about God. It is too brave and bright a dawn to spend 'rotting away in the isolated dungeon of our self-consciousness.'" This is the spirit in which we must meet the mood of scepticism and distraction. I am thinking especially of the church which has unwittingly allowed the time spirit to take control. Inquire from some of its representative members what they actually understand of the Christian life. It will be seen that they fail to distinguish between symptoms and causes, that they interpret life at second hand through problems which the past formulated, that they use the language of day before yesterday and indulge in religious phrases which do not express present realities. Many camouflage their inhibitions, fears and conflicts because of inability to relate themselves to the sources of relief. The abnormal individualism so common to-day is further seen in the rasping behavior of not a few church people.

What a contrast this is to the first days of Christianity! "When we open the New Testament," wrote Principal James Denney, "we find ourselves in the presence of a glowing religious life. There is nothing in the world which offers any real parallel either to this life, or to the col-

lection of books which attests it. The soul which in contemporary literature is bound in shallows and in miseries, is here raised as on a great tidal wave of spiritual blessing. Nothing that belongs to a complete religious life is wanting, neither convictions nor motives, neither penitence nor ideals, neither vocation nor the assurance of victory. And from beginning to end, in all its parts and aspects and elements, this religious life is determined by Christ." [1] This exhibition of fragrant fervor, of infectious joy, of exuberant energy was the direct result of the Pentecostal experience which the disciples received when they came together with large expectations of faith instead of petty excitations of strife. Many things happened on that first occasion and they were frequently repeated on subsequent occasions. Fear of opposition was dispelled by courage. Perplexity was changed to certainty. Hesitation was displaced by exultation. From negative repression which put them on the defensive they passed into the exhilarating atmosphere which made them positively expressive. This was the outcome of the big thing which took place. It was the emergence of fellowship with the living Christ under the unction of the

[1] James H. Denney: *Jesus and the Gospel,* p. 1 (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

Holy Spirit, which also gave them fellowship one with another. They were, moreover, influenced and quickened by the Ideal of Brotherhood set forth by Jesus, which was super-national, super-racial, super-class. They thus became more than conquerors through the loving and lifting Christ.

This experience was greatly weakened when the church was institutionalized. The spiritual idealism of the New Testament was felt to be too stern and it was watered down at least temporarily to meet special emergencies. That is how the leaders argued, but they were mistaken in their compromises as the sequel proved. The church stooped to conquer and succeeded, but it became involved in caste, class and capitalistic conflicts, and lost sight of Christ's teaching of brotherhood. Minority groups protested against the worldly policies and practices of the church and even suffered excommunication and persecution. But strange to say, when these groups achieved power they likewise adopted what they had once denounced. Consider some recent illustrations. The Baptists and Methodists quickly adapted themselves to the changed conditions in the pioneer period of American life, and they showed greater facility than some of the other denominations in increasing their membership.

When the religious enthusiasm of the early days declined, the aggressive note of militant evangelism disappeared. Church life became conventionalized, a class consciousness developed, wealth began to put its clamps upon the freedom of initiative, religious thought and modes of worship reflected the cultural and social views of the membership. In making these changes the church gained the world but its soul was undernourished. The result is well stated by Richard Niebuhr in *The Social Sources of Denominationalism:* "From its position of leadership in the task of integrating humanity it has fallen to the position of a follower in a social process guided by economic and political forces." Plans for denominational mergers are merely the resorts of expediency in the face of a losing cause, unless social and economic factors with their racial, political and nationalistic implications are transformed by an ethical and spiritual Christianity, which reflects the eternal harmony of love revealed by Jesus Christ. In other words, the church must recover its spiritual morale, and give diligence "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

This has been repeatedly done by revivals. A study of the church makes it clear that when it was spiritually at a low ebb, God broke through

the mechanical barriers set up by ritual and dogma by means of Spirit-filled souls on whom he concentrated. In the twelfth century, Francis of Assisi inaugurated a movement marked by the passion of love for Christ in the Holy Spirit. In the fourteenth century, an enthusiasm of righteousness was shown by John Wyclif in England and an austere purity was enforced by Savonarola in Italy under the spell of the Holy Spirit. In the sixteenth century, there was a reanimation of the Spirit due to Luther's rediscovery of God in Christ. In the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Revival was a release of the Spirit in consequence of the strange warming of the heart of John Wesley and his associates. In the nineteenth century, there was an arousal of Christian common sense when Moody with spiritual sagacity summoned the churches to give more convincing proof of practical Christianity in the power of the Spirit. We may differ with them all in matters of theology and method. But let us not divert our attention from the major fact that God had got a grip on them and they had got a grip on God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This experience it was which rejuvenated their lives so that they worked from the center and not the circumference in the name of the Holy, Healthy and

Happy Christ. No sophistication of any kind can explain away this notable fact in the life of historic Christianity.

There is, however, a tendency to disparage revivals on the part of those who confuse revivalism as a method with reviving as an experience. This is due to ignorance of history. Not one of the revivals mentioned above mechanically repeated previous methods nor even considered them. The Reformation did not go back to earlier times by way of imitation but changed the conditions of its own times by initiating what effectively dealt with contemporary errors and corruptions. The Evangelical Revival likewise confronted the problems of its day by interpreting and applying the same Gospel of Christ to the special necessities of its times. Francis Asbury engaged in the Christian campaign in America on lines totally different to those of John Wesley who gave him his ministerial credentials. General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, had as his slogan "blood and fire," which symbolized the life and enthusiasm of Christ; his methods were described as "corybantic" but they met the needs which he knew could be supplied. We must make the important distinction between motives of loyalty to Christ and methods of work for

Christ. Otherwise we shall muddle along mistaking motion for locomotion, and stagnate because we prefer routineers who repeat to thinkers who initiate. It is incredible that when the world of business is thinking in terms of revival and working for revived interest and activity, the church should be sceptical about a revival.

Another reason for such a feeling is that the church's thought about revivals has moved along a single track. As a matter of fact the historical revivals touched life on many sides. Among the Franciscans there were scholars of note such as Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, Ockham and Dante, who were also social and political reformers. In thinking of the russet preachers of Wyclif do not forget that the leaders and some of his associates were university men. The Reformation could not have accomplished its work without Melanchthon, Calvin, Zwingli, who were thinkers interested in civic, industrial as well as religious progress. The followers of Wesley did not consist only of the rank and file but also of men of scholarly distinction such as John Fletcher, Thomas Coke and other Oxford men. What I mean is that these providential revivals were made effective under God by leaders filled with the Spirit of holiness, whose enlightened

interpretations of Christian truth appealed to the intellect, whose enthusiastic testimony from experience aroused the emotion, whose earnest directness in warning and encouragement quickened the will to respond with prompt decision. In other words, these movements were concerned with the whole of life.

Those who take an exclusive view of the Spirit's activities and restrict them to churchly observances have yet to discover that the Spirit of God was the instructor of the farmer, the inspirer of workers in gold, silver and brass, the director of those who frame laws and maintain good government, as well as the stimulator of the virtues and graces associated with genuine religious character and consistent conduct. (Isaiah 28.29; Exodus 35.30; Isaiah 9.6f.) Indeed, every form of activity is religious when performed by those whose lives are consecrated to the God of the Whole. We are thus justified in making a more extended application of this emancipating truth to regard as co-workers all who are engaged in the pursuits of art, literature, music, science, philosophy, business, politics. Just as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus, military rulers, were the agents of God to further his divine purpose, although they were not aware of the fact (Jer. 43.10; Isaiah 44.28), so

these several workers, even when they may deliberately discard God, are used as his agents to advance the Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy. Is this not what our Lord meant when he said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." (John 16. 12f.) Are we not recognizing to-day, as never before, the unity and variety of life, and that all human interests are essentially one? This truth of comprehensiveness is too staggering for the average mind to grasp and yet it is the essence of Christianity. At no time has the Christian Faith been syncretistic or eclectic. In spite of the intolerances and bigotries, characteristic of the ecclesiastical mind, the mind of Christianity has repeatedly reasserted its native catholicity.

We have lost the sense of the Whole by limiting ourselves to a part of the manifold truth concerning the Holy Spirit. The note of apocalypticism is one of impatience uttering the hectic cry, "How long, O Lord," and holding to the crude theory that things must get worse before they get better. It is this impatience which largely accounts for fanaticism where the emotions have gone to seed because they have not been related to the rest of life. This is seen in

the large number of cults outside the church and the hysterical emotionalism in the church. Doctor Joseph Collins declares in *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life,* that we are suffering as a nation from "adult infantilism" because we have not educated and regulated our emotions. This is the finding of psychoanalysis which, in spite of its exaggerations, is emphasizing the need of knowing the background of every individual's life so as to understand the distortions of character and the lapses of conduct. Our problem is how to succor the bruised, to mend the broken, to turn repression into sublimation by spiritualizing instincts, impulses and practices. This is to be done not in the spirit of apocalypticism but of prophetism with its challenge of faith in God, who shall ultimately prevail and be finally acknowledged as in all and over all, blessed for evermore. Such a spirit gives us insight and intuition to see into the inner life of things, and to separate the chaff of non-essentials from the wheat of what is truly central.

Wesley was not less spiritual when he was organizing his charities and editing his library of popular books on philosophy, medicine and literature than when he was preaching to the miners of Cornwall. His work was of a piece because everything was related to the Radiant

Center. So intense was this relationship and so vital and vigorous was the prosecution of the work in all its phases that the Evangelical Revival beneficially influenced politics, philanthropy, education, industry and extended the influence of Christianity through foreign missions. Just as Paul the Spirit-filled apostle helped to remake society in his day by overcoming racial prejudices, social differences, industrial handicaps, intellectual misconceptions, ethical distortions and religious misalliances, so did Wesley the spirit-filled evangelist do for his generation. Others have done the same in their way which was, however, in accord with Christ's way. They thus released repressed forces by leading men and women into the liberty of spiritual experience, which brought light to the intellect, love to the emotions and life to the will. These liberated ones were thus able to show forth the praises of the Redeemer by self-mastery as to themselves, by integrity as to others, by piety as to God. (Titus 2.12.)

Herein is the difference between the evangelical spirit of freedom which is inspired by principles, and the sacerdotal spirit of bondage which is governed by precedents. Both these types are in evidence in the churches and there is an incessant conflict between them. There

cannot be an alliance unless both sides give up the obstinate use of shibboleths and phrases. The broad church and the high church, the liberal and the conservative, the modernist and the fundamentalist are equally onesided and short-sighted. The first party has forgotten the past and thinks only of the present; the second party forgets the present and remembers only the past. True liberty is possible only by faith in the God of Christ, quickened by the divine Spirit. This gives the conviction that no limits are to be set which in any way might inhibit the further unfolding of God's purpose of redemption through the processes of thought and of experience. There are many things which the church is only now learning to understand. It is doing this slowly and in some quarters with reluctance because it is easier to follow the methods of transmission and repetition than the methods of initiation and creation.

The urgent and timely work to be done by the church for this day is practicable only as we recover our spiritual morale. The price to be paid for this both by clergy and laity is to renounce the secular spirit of pride, prejudice and privilege, and to receive the spiritual virtues of humility, openmindedness and responsibility. This means that evangelism will not consist of

merely converting people but of developing them in Christian knowledge and in the Christian graces. That requires patience, perseverance and passion. It further means that our main business is not to engage in campaigns merely to fill our churches by relays of enthusiasm. It is rather to enlist our powers to bring about a spiritual rebirth from within so that our churches may become centers of spiritual and ethical activity, made up of men and women who have a growing religious experience which qualifies them to influence every phase of life. This is to be accomplished by the fulness of the Spirit, which enlarges our receptivity, increases our capacity, multiplies our activity, in the name of the manifold Christ who said: "I am not come to destroy but to develop"; and again, "I am come that they might have vitality and overflow with it." (Matthew 5.17; John 10.10.) This purpose has been repeatedly realized by the work and witness of the Spirit, "who amidst dangers, doubts and difficulties innumerable" has not suffered the faithful and loyal to stray. These consecrated and courageous souls were rather stimulated by the impact of stern difficulties. Their quickened sense of God, their opulent experience of Christ's redemption, their buoyant enduement of the Holy Spirit enabled

them to face every problem with sublime confidence and sustained endurance. They thus saw opportunities in perplexities, and encouragements in discomfitures. They learned from failures to make desirable adjustments, and their renewed efforts brought them the merited fruits of success. We must do likewise. The present *impasse* in the church need not make us panic-stricken but should lead us to the Source of perennial life. *Veni Creator Spiritus.*

"Oh, that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow!

Oh, that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call,
Spirit of burning, come!" [2]

[2] Read *Signs of These Times,* by Willard L. Sperry (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

CHAPTER TWO

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

THE earnest interest in Jesus Christ indicates that everywhere people are showing a desire to reckon with Him. This regard for Christ is generally accompanied by a disregard for the church. One reason is that the practices of its members do not tally with their professions. They seem to be living on their reputation rather than on their resources. They are charged with voicing the sentiments of tradition and not uttering the verdicts of experience. They are busy on the circumference of Christianity because they have lost contact with its center. Their many charitable activities are doubtless gratifying but these cannot atone for the lack of spiritual vitality. This indispensable qualification must be secured. It is chiefly as the Religion of the Spirit that Christianity made its way through the centuries. As such it fired its followers with an energy which realized their spiritual desires, fulfilled their ethical demands and gave a healthy tone to their private and

public behavior. The explanation of this impressive testimony is found in Jesus Christ, who so thoroughly aroused their attention and won their affection that He became the motive and the momentum of all their activities.

He himself is the glorious gospel for our day as for all previous days. The gospel of Jesus and the gospel about Jesus mean the same thing. It is only superficial thinking which would make a distinction, implying that the thought of Jesus was different to that of his immediate followers. There is no such discrimination in the New Testament which is the reliable record of the Christian message. The church began its militant career with that message. There is none other for the modern church if it is to continue Christian and to engage in its work of Pentecostal Evangelism, which is conciliatory, captivating and constructive.

This gospel of Jesus Christ, moreover, is not a declaration of propositions but the proclamation of a living person of exceptional power and incomparable grace. He is the *ideal* man—Jesus, who shows us the way of life and truth. He is the *chosen* man—the anointed Christ, who is ever present with us as we scale the sunlit summits to God, to enter the divine presence in the enjoyment of forgiveness. He is the *filial* man—Son

of God in a unique sense, who offers us also the privilege of communion with God in the experience of sonship. He is, finally the *fraternal* man, who bears the suffering human race upon his heart and summons everyone with the winsome invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The burden of the apostolic evangel was Jesus Christ "Strong Son of God, immortal love," who alone is capable of interpreting and supplying our divers needs. Recall some of the sentences which utter the central and recurring theme of apostle and disciple. "In none other is there salvation." "Through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "Ye were redeemed with precious blood, even the blood of Christ." "He was manifested to take away sins, and in him is no sin."

Turn wherever you will in the New Testament and you meet with one continuous and convincing testimony that to Jesus Christ was given all

the affection and devotion of the whole church. His prophetic declaration: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself," was heartily accepted without the slightest hint of dissension. Those who were drawn to him set their seal that he is the unique Savior, while others who repelled him thereby showed their disapproval of his character of holiness, his crown of sacrifice, his gospel of redemption and his claim of authority. In doing so, they exposed their own inability to fathom the gracious counsels and purposes of God, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Well might Bishop Henson say: "Remove Christ from the central place and the temple of religion is not only empty but ruined." Jesus Christ is the only adequate evangel for our present day of depressing confusion, of subtle sinfulness, of heartbreaking anguish, of irreparable loss.

It is true that he laid the emphasis on the kingdom of God. But we cannot infer, as some do, that the apostles were mistaken when they substituted the King for the Kingdom. Jesus repeatedly drew the attention of his hearers to himself and compelled them to reckon with him. "Follow me"; "Come unto me"; "He that is not with me

is against me"; "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"—these are clear and forceful utterances which permit of only one meaning. After his disciples had sojourned with him for a season he questioned them searchingly: "Whom say ye that I am?" If they failed to understand him and to give him the first place, there was little hope of their being able to press his claims on others and to secure their implicit submission to him. The Synoptic gospels agree with the gospel of John in this respect. Indeed, the four taken together constitute a composite portrait of Jesus, clear in its features and compelling in its appeal. The distinctive qualities of the gospels enrich the significance of their unity. Mark writes of the strength of the Servant of God; Matthew, of the sacrifice of the Anointed of God; Luke, of the sympathy of the Man of God; John, of the sublime spirituality of the Son of God. And yet these traits are not exclusive in each of the memoirs but appear in all four. The several epistles, moreover, interpret and apply the truth of the gospel records. The cry, "Back to Christ," is acceptable if it means back to the Christ of the entire New Testament, whose testimony is consistent, without any disparity or evasion. When we think of him as the living Christ, the

more appropriate summons should be "Forward to Christ," who stands at the parting of the ways and calls us to follow him and turn away from the slippery paths which slope down to hell.

The three great words of the gospel are life, light and love. They strikingly set forth the distinctive character of God. He is *life,* even the source and fountain of it, in whom we live and move and have our being. He is *light,* who reveals himself in gracious self-communication, with whom we realize the blessedness of fellowship. He is *love* whereby he exhibits his supreme passion in equity and benignity for the benefit of "whosoever will." These sublime ideas found expression in the person of Jesus Christ, who reflected God's own character of holy grace. We thus think of him as God-bearer, with a first hand experience of God, who communicates to us his exceptional discovery of God. "In Jesus the chasm between God and man has closed up; in our search for God we have at last arrived; there is no beyond to torment our tired and aching souls; no sense of a distance yet to be traversed, of a separating river yet to be crossed." [3]

The truth of God as love, so richly illumi-

[3] E. Griffith-Jones: *Faith and Immortality,* p. 143 (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York).

nated in the life of Jesus, makes for the large enrichment of human life. The trappings of time, the adornments of princes, the honors of governments—what are they of themselves but so many empty favors! They sit well only on those who have the character of Christlikeness, which is the first and final test of genuine worth. Jesus scandalized the aristocracy of his day because he discarded the cast-iron distinctions of society. He cared neither for the glamor of riches nor for the gloom of poverty. The outcast and the fallen both found in him a friend. His sympathy was so unusually generous, in word and deed, that various classes and nationalities were won. The Roman centurion, the Samaritans of Sychar and the Syrophenician; the publican, the Magdalene and the outcast of every type found a welcome in his healing society. In every age, the laboring man and the professional man, the Oriental and the Occidental, the pious and the impious, have been ennobled by him, who has more than fulfilled their most ardent expectations. Under the influence of Jesus, the early church received this true view of the human race. Room was made for the slave by the side of his master. Both enjoyed equal privileges. It meant a great deal when Paul the freeborn and Onesimus the runaway slave fraternized

with each other. It was this apostle who declared in explicit terms that where Christ is supremely recognized, "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all."

The Gospel magnifies the love of man as man, regardless of class, caste or country. In the days of the church's romance when it honestly accepted, in scorn of consequence, the principle of a common fraternity, there was power in its midst. It wielded an influence even to the undermining of empires and the enthroning of righteousness and truth. Of course its members were exposed to the contempt of the literati and the hostility of the élite of every nation, who regarded them as "crazy and credulous fanatics and as an abomination to society." But none of these things moved them for they had the witness within. The passport into recognition and honor was the Christlike character and not the affluent circumstances. We are being told that the spirit of democracy should universally prevail. It is only as the rights of individuals are mutually respected that we can overcome race and class hatreds with their violent reprisals. "Our gospel is not the survival of the fit but the revival of the unfit." The missionary is demon-

strating this on the foreign field, where distance lends enchantment to the truth. We are doubtless glad to read about the awakening of China and the conversion to Christ of its peoples; but how much do we care about speaking a word for Christ to the Chinese laundryman in our own town? If he were to apply for membership in some of our churches or have the courage to share in the Lord's Supper, certain pious folk would surely be scandalized.

The truths of immortality, equality and fraternity are found in the evangel of Christ. They can be actualized in daily living only as Christ takes control of the mind, the conscience, the heart and the will of those who call themselves Christians. Such a course will doubtless have uncomfortable consequences; but there is no other alternative if the church is to secure a hold on human life in the service of individual and social redemption. We think of Jesus as the sin-revealing, sin-expiating, sin-destroying Christ. This Gospel is in the custody of the church, although the church has not frankly released it to the extent of letting it have the right of way and compelling other issues to step aside.

(a) Sin is the one sinister fact of human life. It has had divers forms but the results have ever been tragic. The foul pollutions of the first

Christian century can be duplicated by the no less fatal corruptions of the twentieth century. What the Bible says of sin and its serpentine subtlety is endorsed by the conscience of humanity. It is so humiliating a menace because it not only alienates man from God but also introduces the demonic elements of suspicion and hostility among men and interferes with progress in the arts and crafts of life. The penalties of sin are both sharp and devouring. Jesus has shown as no other that sin is an inexcusable act making the sinner blameworthy and guilty. No one can plead that it is unavoidable and so find relief for his troubled conscience. In the presence of the sin-revealing One, there is a sifting process. The best and noblest of men acknowledge their failure. Some of their confessions are of classic value. However much we may disagree with their psychology, the mirror is held up to our lives by such searching utterances as the *Psalms,* the *Confessions* of Augustine, *The Imitation of Christ, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,* the *Apologia* of Newman, *My Confession* by Tolstoy.

(b) It is this fact of a stainless life that qualified Jesus to become the sin-expiating One. We need not stop to discuss any theory of the atonement. It is enough to know that the sacrifice of

the Just for the Unjust has verily brought many to God, who never could otherwise have been reconciled. You cannot understand the grace of this evangel and the unfailing love of God until you face Calvary and bow in penitence before Christus Reconciliator, who for us men and for our salvation wrought his deed of might and mercy upon the Cross. It is this fact which has made the Cross the uniquely triumphant symbol of Christianity.

(c) Far more important than any theory is the exultant testimony of a multitude whom no man can number. They have the glowing experience of being delivered from evil and becoming free from the trammels of sinful purposes and passions. The problem of forgiveness will continue to baffle those who approach it by way of logic and metaphysic. The way of life is far better. Those who by faith in Christ have entered into filial relations with God and fraternal relations with men, offer the conclusive argument in changed lives and worthy practices.

Our Gospel then is the good tidings of Jesus Christ who generously and opulently redeems men from the fatal dominance of sin, who delivers them from the depths of despair, who saves them from the stain of guilt and who guides them with ever deepening consecration towards

the splendor of light, the fulness of life, the perfection of love in God. It can bring conviction to others only as our experience expresses itself with constraining power. We can then hope for the professor in Browning's *Christmas Eve* and also for all perplexed by doubt and paralyzed by uncertainty that:

> "When thicker and thicker the darkness fills
> The world through his misty spectacles,
> And he gropes for something more substantial
> Than a fable, myth, or personification,—
> May Christ do for him what no mere man shall,
> And stand confessed as the God of salvation." [4]

[4] Read *The Christ of God,* by S. Parkes Cadman (The Macmillan Company, New York).

CHAPTER THREE

THE WONDERFUL ASSURANCE

THE world of the first century was "full of all knowledge and a God unknown." The loss of nerve impelled those who sought peace to turn to every vagrant superstition which promised help. Even philosophy bowed to this hysterical mood and the daylight was far to seek. The spirit of man was crushed and distracted. His spiritual confusion was shown in ethical eccentricities. Jesus came into this depressing atmosphere with a new view of God and a new life in God. He removed the rubbish that cluttered the approaches to God and made him accessible to every individual. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." This Gospel imparted vitality, and those who accepted it enjoyed an exuberant experience of deliverance from mental and moral servitude. This personal note of actual fellowship with God has given clarity and charity to Christian testimony in every age.

Such a witness from history must be reckoned

with. Just as the scientist and philosopher take note of previous investigations in their departments, so the influence of Christ during the past must be regarded as an invaluable factor in the solution of our problem how to win the world for him. The closing verse in the gospel of Mark reads: "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." The book of Acts richly illustrates the ways in which this was done. The narrative shares the glow of the movement. It was a company of devoted men and women who undertook the business of magnifying the name of Jesus Christ. Opposition and persecution only stimulated their activities. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the opponents of the Gospel increased their fiery hostility and undertook a systematic campaign of assault so that many were compelled to leave Jerusalem. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." The reference is to the rank and file of the disciples who realized their obligation as missionaries. One conspicuous result was the capture of Antioch for Christ. This city at once became the center of a notable evangelistic and missionary campaign. These earnest Christians threw themselves heart and soul into the movement. The

loyalty of love for Jesus so fired their lives that their faith was spread in the very act of living. They themselves were the most vital part of their testimony. In the words of Bishop Westcott, they were "a living Gospel, a message of God's good-will to those with whom they lived and suffered." They took with them an experience and not a theory; they proclaimed a person and not a doctrine. It was therefore impossible to suppress them. Peter voiced their sentiments when he said to the Jewish Council: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Silence was out of the question and their influence penetrated near and far, enabling them to score unprecedented triumphs in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The evangel of redemption was worthily proclaimed. Their preaching of purity was consistently supported by their practice of it. The water of life did not flow through rusty pipes; it was therefore sweet and refreshing. The Sanhedrin, before whom Peter and John appeared to answer charges, were impressed by the boldness of these men. Their behavior recalled that of their Master, whose calmness and courage some of them had witnessed. "And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

The splendor and loyalty of the Christian life give evidence that it is patterned after Jesus, whose possessing spirit reproduces in his followers the unique traits of character which were so distinctive of our Savior and Lord. What he was in such sublime grace, they also can become by faith in him. "Jesus Christ shows us in living definition what the Christian ought to be." The Apostolic Church was fully persuaded of this truth and had the courage to accept it for themselves as well as to commend it to others. These living epistles were more intelligible and persuasive than the written ones. What counted most was not the argument of logic but the appeal of life; not the declaration of a creed but the exhibition of a character. Their glowing experience of the grace of Jesus gave them the consciousness of his forgiveness. The conviction of his redeeming love induced them to make consecration of their lives to him, who in his own person had brought to them freedom from moral slavery, redemption from spiritual bondage and relief from social pressure. Since then Jesus Christ has ever remained the central fact in the life of the world, regarded with eagerness by some, with confusion by others, but with satisfaction by all who accept him.

"Sweetest note in seraph's song,
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus! blessed Jesus!"

This Christian experience was something unique in the first century. It is even so to-day although we are familiar with its features. It has never failed to secure a favorable impression for Christ, who has received the allegiance of the highest reason and the most enlightened conscience of every age and land. The same is true of lesser grades of intelligence. We think of such extreme cases as are cited in *Twice Born Men* by Begbie and *The Everlasting Mercy* by Masefield, and it makes us grateful to know that the power of the living Savior is effective among men who have lapsed into the moral depths. Those who were not so desperately alienated from God have also been reconciled and brought into filial relations with the Heavenly Father. It is through Jesus Christ that they have all been able to find themselves and to realize the best for them in the purpose of redemption. "The saved soul if saved in Love's name," writes Boyce Gibson, "must itself become a savior; for the spiritual life, as Love conceives it, is by nature self-communicative, invasive, redemptive." It is not enough to rejoice in the promise of the

gospel which is forgiveness; we must also rejoice in the pressure of the gospel which is fidelity to Christ in making him known. We shall then be able to exult in the power of the gospel which has saved unto the uttermost and will continue to do so.

Here then we are confronted by the all-important question of personality. What is this but character which is the result of a series of practices and habits quietly and diligently pursued in the obscure routine and daily grind of life. A full heart will act with spontaneity, cordiality and generosity. Such a blithesome spirit which manifests itself in deeds is due to that subtle and elusive but very real thing known as a redeemed and consecrated personality. The spirit of love accepts no limits and its fruitage is both versatile and abundant. We think of love as the clear illuminator, the strong liberator, the complete transformer of life in every condition of weal or of woe. We do not think of it merely as an emotion, although even so it has been the bringer of untold blessing to the human race, through parenthood, filial devotion, patriotism, and the myriad forms in which it has found expression. When we read of the advances of that early century telling of comprehensiveness and progress due to the influence of Christ-filled personalities,

let us not doubt the veracity of the record but take it at its face value as it points out to us the better course that we also should take.

There are several things which stand out in the life of the early Christians which may well be followed by modern Christians. They were intensely in earnest and were fully swayed by their convictions. A man who is sincere even though he may be mistaken, has a better chance of persuading people than the other who is lukewarm, although he may be in possession of God's truth. *Earnestness* is single-mindedness of purpose which says "This one thing I do," and therefore subordinates everything else to it. It is not difficult to know where such a person stands. He is never on the fence and under no circumstances will he compromise if principle is at stake. He realizes the seriousness of the issues and is ever intent on duty in season and out of season. Who can turn down such an individual or resist the winsomeness of his speech and action? There is nothing of the fanatic in such behavior but a sober reasonableness like that shown by Paul when he argued with Felix about righteousness, self-mastery and the future judgment, and when on a different occasion he appealed to Agrippa, wishing from the depths of his being that the king himself might also become a Christian.

Another quality which invariably accompanies earnestness is *certainty*. It was not sinking ground on which they stood, for they had the assurance of experience that "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." There was the note of finality permitting of no denial nor dispute that "In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." This consentient testimony of many witnesses could hardly be challenged with any chance of its being refuted. Principal P. T. Forsyth once said that the ancient prophet responded to the summons with the quick answer "Here am I!"; but the modern prophet speaks out of confusion and despair, and asks: "Where am I?" Such an attitude of doubt and perplexity can never accomplish much. It was Phillips Brooks who counselled, saying: "Be sure of God and yourself and of the love between your soul and his, and then shrink from no changefulness, cling to no present, be ready for new skies, new tasks, new truths." Such confidence did they of the first century have.

There was thus begotten in them the spirit of *joy* which was full of grace and gladness. It charmed away their despair and weariness; it

worked like a spell over souls diseased and perplexed by sin; it was a precious cordial when borne down by the weight of care and trouble. The voice of song from the heart, the witness to joy from the depths, the temper of peace in truth, will do more to convince the world of the power of the evangel, which is truly good news, than any other seemingly strong arguments. Joy will further dispel worry, which William James defined as "fearthought as distinct from forethought." It will also give the restful disposition which is so unlike the fret and strain and humid distemper of much modern Christianity.

Joy is of such consequence because it quickens *enthusiasm.* This is the spirit of buoyancy and optimism, of indomitable faith and unyielding vitality. This it is that inspires and impels us and hastens us on to victory. This is the spirit which has purified the spirit and enlightened the vision of those who made great ventures on God and who enlisted on stalwart adventures for God. Hence they were aggressive and bold to take the initiative in making approach to the needy soul. When we think of so many who are unchurched and indifferent, and even resentful and hostile, it is clear that they can be won, if at all, only by those who are endowed with a large supply of enthusiasm, that wavers not but which

increases in endurance through patience. "The church lives," said W. Robertson Nicoll, "only by capture, by booty, by winning over from the world the citizens that make her numbers." Donald Hankey in one of his last papers wrote: "There is only one way to win men to Christ, and that is to show to them something of his love, and humility, and quiet strength, and humorous common sense, his distrust of the efficacy of human aids to success, and his quiet confidence in the power of love and truth." Saul Kane in *The Everlasting Mercy* recognized his obligation in words which might well be used by every Christian:

> "I knew that I was done with sin,
> I knew that Christ had given me birth,
> To brother all the sons of earth."

These men of Jesus of the early dawn carried with them a sacramental spirit to impart the grace of the gospel of love and redemption to all who were without its blessed benefits. Divine virtue thus went forth from them to heal, to comfort, to purify and to gladden troubled lives. They gave themselves to the work, not as though it were a superficial performance and a perfunctory task, to be gotten through as speedily as possible. They took it as a privileged toil at

which they continued until nightfall. Their persistence they received through intimate and constant association with him who came, not to destroy but to develop, not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

Fra Angelico painted the Crucifixion on his knees and with deep emotion. He once said that, "he who would do the work of Christ must dwell continually with him." Such was the practice of the first followers as it has been of the faithful in every generation. They caught the Spirit of the Master and so they had his accent and manner, his purpose and bearing, his ministry and service. Their character was marked by quietness and confidence, strength and repose, joy and patience, assurance and endurance. Thus they gave answer to controversy and criticism, and were more than conquerors through him that loved them and loveth us.

"O blessed work for Jesus!
O rest at Jesus' feet!
There toil seems pleasure,
My wants are treasure,
And pain for him is sweet,
Lord, if I may,
I'll serve another day!" [5]

[5] Read *The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World*, by T. R. Glover (Yale University Press, New Haven).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIVINE ENERGY

THE celebration of the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost is to be thought in terms of the calendar as well as of character. Christianity has undergone many changes of outward expression. It has transformed itself many times over and made room for the new knowledge and the different activities of the centuries. It is doing this to-day and reckoning with the new scientific outlook, the new philosophies, the new social order. But it has retained its distinctive quality as "the life which is hid with Christ in God," through the experience of the Indwelling Spirit. It is this dynamic fact which needs to be frankly faced by the church in these days of waning influence. It is not a question of the old or the new but of the permanent. Christianity is the religion of liberty in the Spirit of Christ, imparting salvation and sanctification for the fullness of life. This has always been its claim sustained by results, in spite of other and contrary expressions which have frequently jeopardized its

genuine influence. This major fact of spiritual distinction must be given its primary place in order that the church, as the Fellowship of the Spirit, may discharge its redemptive mission in the power of the blessed Trinity.

The initial enduement on the day of Pentecost gave freedom of utterance for testimony by word and deed, which made a far-reaching impression. Men who were timid and fearful were now possessed of abounding courage and fearless aggressiveness. In their desire to exalt the Name that is above every name, they went out of the way to proclaim its virtues. Such was their ardor that they broke through national barriers and age-long prejudices and proclaimed the grace of Christ to Jew and Samaritan, to Roman and Greek, to freedmen, slaves and aliens, regardless of racial or social considerations. Converts multiplied wherever these flaming evangelists went. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The forward movements were all accompanied by spiritual exhibitions which were distinct manifestations of the working of the Holy Spirit in and through these believers, for the greater glory of God and his Christ.

It was this fact of the Indwelling Spirit which explains the intrepid energy, the zealous perseverance, the holy enthusiasm, the inspirational

devotion of the early Christians. God was not afar off but near at hand, and they had a vivid consciousness of the divine presence. They gave the impression that they had the best thing in the world. They further let it be known in so attractive a manner that inquirers appeared who promptly entered into the enjoyment of the Pentecostal blessedness. The fullness of the Spirit was the secret of their conspicuous success, as it was the primary and indispensable qualification for effective evangelism. The divine Spirit did not touch them from without but transformed them from within. So one chased a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, illustrating at once the source of their ability which was from above, and the significance of their unity, in that two men, in the communion of the Spirit, did not do twice the work of one but ten times the work of one, according to the process of multiplication in the spiritual world.

There may be other advantages like organization and scholarship, but they are of real worth only when they are connected with the dynamo of God. Thus did there come power to move men—to enlighten the mind, to stir the and to sway the life Godwards. Take the case of conscience, to warm the heart, to direct the will Apollos who was both learned and eloquent.

He was at best only a preacher of ethical culture and his appeals continued to be ineffectual until he received the evangelical experience. A similar illustration was that of Thomas Chalmers who was an exemplary minister so far as he went. But there came a spiritual crisis when after much searching he made the great surrender, and then his career witnessed a release of energies that made him the conspicuous leader of the church in Scotland and one of the great Christian prophets of the nineteenth century. Go back in years to the twelve men whom Paul met at Ephesus. They were earnest and sincere and willing to work, but they were without spiritual ability. They had received the baptism of repentance unto a great expectation of the coming Messiah. This deliverer had already come bringing the fullness of life and liberty. They were not aware of this thrilling fact until Paul announced it to them. They then readily received the baptism of redemption unto a gracious experience and a glorious enduement.

Pentecost is related to Calvary and the two must never be separated. There can be renewal of life only as there is redemption from sin. The Holy Spirit has been well described as "the missing factor in our personality." It was only after these twelve men accepted Christ as Savior

that they experienced the spirit of revival and quickening, which radically changed them. The abiding presence of the Spirit with them and within them empowered and enabled them to become effectual helpers of the apostle in the evangelization of Ephesus and around. Until the fire of the Spirit fell on them they were arrested in their movements, but afterwards they had grip and tone and resonance. They were emancipated from all encumbrances and entered upon the campaign with the white heat of enthusiasm. Under these circumstances we are not surprised to read of the mighty revival which swept through the city, so that Diana the goddess had to give way to Christ the Redeemer.

This is the central issue before the Christian church. Questions of organization and method are absolutely subordinate to the vital question of the control of our life by the Holy Spirit. Other matters are to be determined by local necessities but this is the preëminent consideration, to be faced everywhere and by everyone with seriousness and urgency. There can be union and unity only *in* the Holy Spirit; there can be communion only *of* the Holy Spirit; there can be power only *through* the Holy Spirit; there can be advance only *with* the Holy Spirit. If we work independently of this divine

energy we are bound to fail. This indeed has been the case, as we think of the present spiritual helplessness of the church. We do not deny the activity of ecclesiastical machinery of all types and sizes, but there seems to be a strange lack of power. Only the enlightening and energizing Spirit can make of the church an inspired and inspiring people, who by reason of their superior vitality will destroy the enervating and enfeebling atmosphere of the world, with its disregard and discounting of the creative and redemptive presence of the everlasting God. This will give the aroma and fragrance of the full Christian life with its exuberance of joy and gladness. The melody in the heart will express itself in songs of radiant rejoicing, and continue to drive out all the poisonous vapors of delusion and depression. The languid feeling, the laggard movement, the weary look, the sense of defeat will be displaced by buoyant cheerfulness, gladsome endurance, fearless vigor and genuine radiance.

What do we commonly find in the church? There are lines of weariness on the face when it should reflect the light of heaven. Instead of the animating note of conviction we hear what might be called machine-made opinions with the clang and clatter of chains, more suggestive of

bondage than of freedom. A present illumination will not lead us nervously seeking for precedents but will give us independence of the past which need not necessarily imply that we lose our respect for the honored and holy past. The desire for a higher life, a closer walk with God, a fuller sense of his fellowship, a keener insight in discerning his will, a heartier willingness to remedy the wrongs of life even at the cost of sacrifice, a more eager response to the cry of need and anguish, a readier sympathy with the sufferer are among the marks of the militant church. But the attitude and life of Christians hardly convey the impression made by their Master, who said of himself: "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Surely there is a distinction that needs to be clearly understood, a truth that must be accepted, an emphasis that should be recovered by the church. We are straitened in ourselves and so we have become limited in the exercise of that influence which is strictly conditioned by the daily, personal renewal of the Holy Spirit. Doctor J. H. Jowett's testimony in his volume, *The Passion for Souls,* is impressive and to the point: "Speaking for myself, I have to say that even when for a day I enter upon my inheritance, and realise the ineffable nearness of the great Companion-Spirit,

the strain not only goes out of my mind and heart, but I feel the very wrinkles and care-lines being smoothed out of my face. If we were children of Pentecost, living up to our spiritual times, heart's-ease would bloom just within our gate, and the weary wayfarer would be stopped by its perfume, and would question us as to the secret and manner of its growth." [6]

At different periods in the history of the church, great truths which were overlooked and neglected have arrested attention like the resplendence of the sun at high-noon. Such occasions have been invariably followed by revivals when the church entered as it were upon a new career in a spirit of rejuvenescence. So was it at the Reformation, when Luther declared that a man is justified by faith. So was it at the Evangelical revival, when Wesley proclaimed the assurance of salvation and the witness of the Spirit. So in the recent awakening of the social conscience, when the church is being brought to see the imperious necessity of applying the social teachings of Jesus, the prophets and the apostles for the Christianization of society and the nations. Our present demands can be met only by the spiritual reinvigoration of the eternal Spirit.

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[6] J. H. Jowett: *The Passion for Souls*, p. 86 (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York).

Our sense of insufficiency and inadequacy should compel us in penitent supplication, in genuine surrender, in sincere consecration, to obtain the power which will give us greatest capacity and largest achievement. Professor J. Rendel Harris, a New Testament scholar and one of the rare spiritual teachers of the church, says in *Aaron's Breastplate:* "To put the matter plainly for practical people, the Pentecostal gift is, to a large extent, one of the lapsed experiences of the Christian Church. Every believer ought to have the experience; only a few really have it and confess it. For us, then, it is not a question how the first believers reached the blessing, but how may modern believers get back to it." [7]

Our identity is not lost when we thus identify ourselves with God. Our individuality is rather deepened and intensified and our faculties are reinforced. There is a marked release of energy which enhances personality. What is latent comes to the surface, and powers of which we were hardly aware are stirred within us. In a very literal and true sense we become a new creation, even the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works, "in righteousness and holiness of truth." There is no room in such

[7] J. Rendel Harris: *Aaron's Breastplate*, p. 177 (Headley Brothers, London).

a life for the pettiness of selfishness and strife, for the rancor of discord and jealousy, for the bitterness of spite and ill-will. We shall, instead, give diligence, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We shall see to it that the peace of Christ rules in our hearts and that the word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom; and whatsoever we do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to the Spirit of the Master, who did always those things that pleased the Father. Paul condemned the Corinthian Christians because their behavior was un-Christlike; and he pointed out how absurd it was to expect to win the world by unwinsome means.

The Holy Spirit is a glad Spirit. He does not make for confusion and disorder but for harmony and unity. He inspires to steadfastness and continuance in well-doing. He is the Spirit of *truth* and those who are influenced by him have the note of reality and genuineness. He is the Spirit of *holiness;* the Christian character is therefore distinguished by healthy and wholesome virtues. He is the Spirit of *power;* the life which is strengthened by him does not yield to despair, nor surrender to defeat, nor give way to discouragement. Thus did those men of the New Testament live. As you read this remark-

able little book you never come across the minor key in the music of their Spirit-filled lives. Every page is written in the style of the Doxology, although its writers had suffered much which might have justified the passing lapse into an occasional complaint. They were constantly aware of the rich resources of their ally, the divine Companion; and even when it was darkest they were certain that the rift in the cloud would appear somewhere, somehow, sometime. In this confidence they were heroically sustained by the blessed Presence, and they had the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

When you are run down physically hard tasks are difficult and you feel a nervous strain in everything. A tonic is then necessary to brace up the system. When you suffer from spiritual depression and are easily upset, when you are quickly discouraged and lightly lose heart, it may be due to general depletion. But do not sit under a juniper tree. "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord." You will there learn that his presence is not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. As you listen you will hear; and when you understand, obey. Thus will you be refreshed at the fountain of life and be able to lead others also to him who giveth what shall

become in each one "a well of water springing up unto eternal life." The source of power is within your reach. But you cannot receive its benefits unless you let the spirit of self give way to the Spirit of God. Then you will be controlled, directed and sustained for an acceptable service.

"Spirit, who makest all things new,
Thou leadest onward; we pursue
The heavenly march sublime,
'Neath thy renewing fire we glow,
And still from strength to strength we go,
From height to height we climb.

"In thee we rise, in thee we rest;
We stay at home, we go in quest,
Still thou art our abode.
The rapture swells, the wonder grows,
As full on us new life still flows
From our unchanging God." [8]

[8] Read *The Christ of Every Road*, by E. Stanley Jones (The Abingdon Press, New York).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EMPOWERING PRACTICE

THE true virtue of prayer was experienced by the disciples only after Pentecost. How little they grasped its real intent is seen in what took place in the upper room. Instead of concentrating on the supreme business of the hour they took a recess to attend to a wholly different matter. On the suggestion of Peter they gave their attention to selecting a successor to the traitor. This election was doubtless distracting and the decision was unfortunate. The choice fell on Matthias of whom we hear nothing in the later activities of the church. It was a premature and mistaken move. Had they waited for the unfolding of events, the man of destiny would have appeared, as he certainly did, in the person of Paul. He was "born out of due time," to use his own words, but he was God's choice for the apostolate and he amply justified the divine call.

It has frequently happened in the history of the church that sincere but mistaken men have

precipitated courses which compromised the church's testimony. The first thing and the only thing that the Lord required his disciples to *do* was to pray and wait for the enduement by the Holy Spirit. They would then understand how best to fulfill their commission and introduce new and more effective methods of work. A finely constructed engine according to the latest model is of no value unless it has steam or electricity. More important than perfecting the organization as to the *personnel* of the leadership and the like was to obtain the capital wherewith to operate it. Christian activities without the needed spiritual backing have led the church farther from its prescribed goal. In spite of the movement and noise of machinery the results are in inverse ratio to the efforts expended. The outstanding cause is frankly stated in a volume entitled *Concerning Prayer* edited by B. H. Streeter: "In all the churches of late there has resounded a call to prayer. It has met with singularly little response. The reason is not far to seek. The present generation is ready to respond to a call for higher service—but the times do not allow men to put thought and effort into anything unless they are convinced that it is well worth while. And at the back of most men's minds there is the belief, more or less clearly

defined, that prayer is an activity the value of which is so open to question, that for the men and women who have to carry on the world's work it decidedly is not worth while; it may safely be left to ministers and monks and to pious ladies who have nothing else to do." [9]

This is a challenge to indifference which must be accepted. If religion is union with God then there must be communion with God, in order that its efficacy might be increasingly experienced. Now, prayer is the essence of religion, and the consciousness of the love of God is the essence of prayer. So that without the practice of prayer we are left without any foundation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit gave to the disciples the accent and authority of prayer. It was offered in the name of Christ, whose will and purpose they accepted for their own guidance. He strictly enjoined them to cultivate the true inwardness of life, and he made it clear that it was possible only through prayer. Certain conditions must, however, be diligently observed. "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." It is a place of *quiet,*

[9] B. H. Streeter (Editor): *Concerning Prayer*, p. ix (The Macmillan Company, New York).

where the distractions of contrary counsels and interests are set aside for the sake of meditation. It is also a place of *silence,* where we cease our clatter and listen to the still small voice for understanding and direction. It is further a place of *calmness,* when the winds of God blow over the soul and there comes the peace of God which passeth all understanding. The terms of the divine promise are explicit: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The emphasis is on the spirit and attitude of those assembled, without any reference to numbers. When those who are in personal fellowship with God associate with one another in the exercises of supplication, they enter into the richest religious experiences. They pray in unity of spirit and there is unanimity as their desires sound together.

Consider some instances of the virtue and efficacy of prayer. Deliverance from prison came to Peter in answer to the united, fervent, continued prayer of the Christians. Peter and John were threatened by the authorities and when they returned to their company they prayed, and "the place was shaken where they were gathered together." In a time of dark crisis Paul knew what prayer meant in giving him a

sense of the divine presence, for he wrote: "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me."

Think of John Wyclif and his russet preachers, of Luther, Melanchthon and their associates, of Wesley and the Holy Club, of Livingstone in Africa, of Paton in the New Hebrides, of the Haystack meeting, of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, of George Müller, of Dwight L. Moody. The outburst of spiritual activity and zeal with which these several men were connected was directly due to the fellowship of prayer. It can never be otherwise. We hold conventions and conferences to listen to noted speakers and to reports from committees. We then pass resolutions and flatter ourselves that everything is prosperous. It is a delusion. At very few of our religious gatherings does prayer occupy a conspicuous place, and when it does appear it takes an apologetic stand behind a song service or some such device which is more or less of a compromise measure. The pathos of it all is that we are not conscious of the fact of loss, and yet we are being smitten hip and thigh by the enemy, and are left high and dry.

Real prayer depends on a true conception of God. He is not a harsh tyrant before whom we grovel in abject submission. He is not a whimsi-

cal taskmaster whose judgment is warped by passion and prejudice. He is not a bloodthirsty demon who is satisfied only with rivers of blood. He is our Father who does not need to be coaxed or bribed or flattered or entreated with much speaking before he hears us. He does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and he confers his blessings with a liberal hand, without stint or limitation. Hence the encouraging exhortation: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in absolute assurance of faith." Much of the trouble with most prayers is the lack of faith. Hence there is uncertainty and hesitation. If we actually believe that prayer is the mightiest force on earth to sway the destinies of men, we will rely on it with whole-hearted abandon and use it with enthusiastic confidence. In the presence of the withered fig tree Jesus urged his disciples to have faith in God, and he added: "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it." How different this is to the cringing attitude which is common in many books of devotion. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius,* a classic among Roman Catholics, exhibits a pagan and artificial spirit in prayer, so radically different

from the exhilarating atmosphere of filial freedom imparted by Jesus. The *Private Devotions* of Bishop Andrewes, the Anglican, takes us into a world of ascetic repressions, so unlike the open air freedom of the New Testament. Our Lord was much in prayer but it did not consist of protracted petitioning as of continuous communing with God. When demands on his time and energy pressed on him, he insisted on spending time in solitude for intercession and inspiration. "In the morning," before the distractions began to interfere; "when even was come," at the close of the day's labors, Jesus found refreshment in the presence of his Father. This secret of power has been enjoyed by others who have been with the Master in the "school of prayer." It has been well said that, "the man who prays will be found to be the man who is generative and operative when others are non-resultant."

The nature of prayer is as manysided as life at its noblest and best. There is *adoration* with reverence, thanksgiving and praise, as we come into the presence of the Divine, recognizing the majesty and holiness, the might and grace of God, and rejoicing in the mercies so opulently conveyed to us. There is *confession* which keeps one humble, as he acknowledges sin and imperfection, and pleads the merits of the blessed

Savior, and seeks for pardon and renewal of life in sincere obedience. There is *supplication* when we submit our needs to God, not as though we were making a demand but expressing an earnest desire, like the Man of Gethsemane, who said: "Not my will but thine be done." While petition has reference to oneself, the act of *intercession* is prayer on behalf of others. It is the highest form of prayer when we carry the needs of others in a vicarious spirit, and are ready to go to the limit of sacrifice and suffering. You have a new interest in those for whom you have earnestly prayed. It invariably prepares you to do more and better for them. Think of the interceding Christ in the Upper Room, when he poured out his soul for his immediate and prospective disciples. Then think of Christ on Calvary, and you will realize that intercession always leads to the noblest service. "He is able to save unto the uttermost . . . seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." The bearing of this on evangelism can be demonstrated without any lengthy argument. An interceding church is a victorious church, concerning which our Lord said: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Every revival is sent of God but it is also the "result of strivings and pleadings and agonies of desire," as well as of strug-

glings and wrestlings and activities of will in every walk of life, inspired thereto by the Spirit of Christ. "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth children." Are we willing to go down into the valley of humiliation, and pay the price of sacrifice, and take our life in our hands, and thus show a spirit of determination as we begin a season of supplication and intercession? Thus only shall we reap the reward.

All prayer is based on the filial spirit, and what counts most is the direction of our prayer. Our will is not dormant but dominant, and through prayer we seek to rise to those higher levels where God's will reigns supreme. On those holy heights the human will is charged and surcharged, formed and transformed, endued and endowed by the Spirit divine. Man then approaches God not as a suppliant in a spirit of fatalism, but as a sympathizer in the spirit of faith. "The curse of so much religion is that men cling to God with their weakness rather than with their strength." Principal Forsyth, who quotes this sentence from George Meredith, adds: "Let us beware of a pietist fatalism which thins the spiritual life, saps the vigor of character, makes humility mere acquiescence and piety only feminine, by banishing the will from prayer as much as thought has been ban-

ished from it." Prayer when rightly understood is the real battlefield of life. The inevitable wrestling in prayer makes it a serious, an exacting and an exhausting business. In the garden our Lord sweat as it were great drops of blood, in his stern endeavor at that hour of darkness, to enter into the full counsel of God with unreserved surrender. The outcome in Gethsemane explains his victory at Calvary. If we would meet dark days and nerve-racking difficulties, it must be in a spirit of calmness and self-possession which can be obtained by the use of the sacrament of prayer.

Answers to prayer do not consist in receiving what we ask but rather in getting insight and moral strength for the performance of duty. What we most need is illumination which gives us guidance and ability to do at any cost. "We know not how to pray as we ought," wrote the apostle; "but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us." And if we pray in the Spirit, weakness will turn to strength, uncertainty to confidence, fear into courage, anxiety into assurance, panic into peace. These are the true answers to the waiting soul, and it means that we obtain inspiration for endurance and continuance in the work of evangelism. How easy

it is to become discouraged, especially when results do not immediately follow earnest and sustained efforts! But by prayer the mind is strengthened, the will is invigorated, the life is kept joyous and equable. Let us not infer that prayers are not literally answered. The lives of Christians abundantly illustrate that fervent supplications are actually heard. We have only to mention the names of such leaders as Andrew Murray, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, Chinese Gordon, George Matheson, to be reminded that this is one of the joys of the prayer life. "No really great theologian, no really great believer," says W. Robertson Nicoll, "has ever lived to whom prayer was not infinitely more important than any mere exercise of the intellect." As another wrote: "Prayer is the discipline of desire in the light of the best consciousness of God that we can attain unto." Let us recover and use the practice of prayer which has been lost by spiritual inertia and religious preoccupation. This can be done only as we are genuinely convinced that it is an indispensable and imperious necessity. Indeed, prayer is the secret of virtue and vitality, for it furnishes us with the energies of reinforcement and keeps us true to our best selves and qualifies us to meet every

emergency. There is positively nothing else that can take its place and make us spiritually effective. Its continuous use will result in definitely advancing the triumphs of the Gospel to earth's remotest bounds.

"Ask not for life of ease, but ask
From strength to strength to grow.
Pray not to measure out your task
By powers that you may show,
But ask for powers to meet demands,
For love that knows no strife,
For crystal vision, tireless hands—
A better self for life." [10]

[10] Read *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science,* by William Adams Brown (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York).

CHAPTER SIX

THE CREATIVE PASSION

THE conversion and career of the Apostle Paul changed the course of Christianity and hastened its progress among the nations. His personality and achievement have given him front rank among the world's greatest men. He is to be understood with special reference to his undivided devotion to Christ. The purpose which consistently controlled, stimulated and directed him was expressed in the words: "The love of Christ constraineth us." This brief sentence explains his creative passion. He was indebted to the Redeemer Christ beyond all that tongue could tell, and daily did his sense of obligation increase. The promise of the gospel of salvation was so thoroughly fulfilled in his own life that he experienced the passionate passion of the gospel and was ready on every occasion to preach its good tidings. Whether he was speaking to a single individual like Felix the governor or to Onesimus the runaway slave; or whether he was addressing a company, composed of royalty or

of the common people, he was always eager to induce his hearers to accept the message of Christ and receive deliverance from sin. He became all things to all men that he might by all means save them. It was not rhetoric when he soberly declared: "I could have wished myself accursed and banished from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my natural kinsmen"; and again when he said: "I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." It was this same irrepressible ardor which he showed when, after he was stoned at Lystra almost to the point of death, he returned to that same city in a few days, fearless and faithful. (Acts 14.19-21.)

Paul was certain beyond any shadow of doubt that the world was alienated and estranged from God. He was also confident that only through Christ could man be restored to friendship with God. He knew that many had wandered away from the Father owing to ignorance of his character and a misunderstanding of his purpose of world-wide redemption. He always made a point of emphasizing the truth that all people are equally precious in the sight of God and that in Christ every wall of separation has forever been abolished, be it racial, ethnic, national, social or what not. He, moreover, had the cour-

age to accept this conclusion, although he was severely criticized by some of his fellow-Christians for going too far and letting down the bars of inherited privilege in the name of Jesus Christ, who was the first to recognize only the privilege of genuine merit and intrinsic worth. It is certainly refreshing to be in the company of this fervent preacher who was so far ahead of his times, as indeed he is of our times, and whose teachings of Christ the Savior and Unifier of all peoples puts the blush of shame upon us for being so narrow and superficial.

We are doubtless familiar with the words of Jesus spoken in defence or in explanation of his practices, but they have a deeply profound meaning when considered in the light of recent events. "The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost," was the reason why he extended the hospitality of the gospel to Zaccheus the outcast. "The Son of man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many," was said to his disciples, who were obsessed by thoughts of place and position, and ignored the uncomfortable mission of sacrificial service of those who were socially submerged, for whom also Christ had died. Jesus treated everyone with respect, and by his gracious hearing he drew out of the inner recesses of the soul

those feelings and desires which find satisfaction only in fellowship with the heavenly Father. Nowhere do we see any spirit of indifference or hopelessness concerning the spiritual possibilities of men. Jesus always had a wholesome confidence in the redemptibility of everyone. His life was therefore heartily consecrated to the business of winning them for God, with an enthusiasm that was continuous and costly. It involved the sacrifice on the Cross, which was the price of this all-dominating passion for the highest welfare of the whole human race. "Perhaps the conscience of him who feels that he is obliged to go as far as this for men, most of whom he has never seen, none of whom can wholly please him, and many of whom pain him unutterably is the crowning marvel. The sense of obligation revealed at Calvary is its supreme surprise." So wrote President Coffin in his searching volume on *Social Aspects of the Cross.* On another page he says: "It is only when we are convinced of Christ's individual concern in every one of the millions of China, or of the thousands on a congested city block that we are at one with him. We then cease arguing about their worth, their improvability, their need of more justice or better religion. What each is to

the heart of God in Christ, that and nothing less he is to us." [11]

This deep sense of obligation was shared to the full by Paul and the writers of the New Testament. "We love, because he first loved us," said John. The love for Christ thus had a reflex influence. You cannot love Christ without loving what he loved, and showing your love in ways that are suggestive of his Spirit. "I desire to burn out for my God," said Henry Martyn, as he began missionary work in India. How very like Paul, who spoke of the constraining love of Christ! The word *constrain* has the elements of strength. It describes an active and not a passive experience. Restraint is negative, and does not lead to redemption, either of oneself or of others. Constraint implies an urging and an impelling. It holds together the several impulses of the soul; it shuts them in and confines them within bounds like the banks of a river for depth, and so there is concentration for effectiveness. Such was the experience which led Paul to say: "This one thing I do." Everything else was subordinated to the supreme business of bringing men to God. His evangelistic spirit has

[11] Henry S. Coffin: *Social Aspects of the Cross*, pp. 34, 63 (Doubleday, Doran & Company, New York).

been well described by F. W. H. Myers in the stirring poem, *Saint Paul:*

"Oft when the Word is on me to deliver
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or the river,
Melts in a lucid Paradise of air;—

"Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things;—

"Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!" [12]

No one can feel in this way except he have the vision of Christ. It was said of Hugh Price Hughes, the English Methodist, that he recovered for his church its ancient passion for the souls of men and set it in living power in the stream of modern life. But Hughes believed in the redemption of the whole man and was one of the pioneers in preaching Social Christianity. In replying to a charge that he was not preaching the gospel when he discussed social questions, he said: "I might have settled the matter by saying

[12] F. W. H. Myers: *Saint Paul,* p. 34 (The Macmillan Company, New York).

that I had no disembodied 'souls' in my congregation, but that I had souls incarnate, souls attached to bodies and that we must deal with man as a complex being. There is too much truth in the saying I have often quoted of late that 'some very earnest Christians are so diligently engaged in saving *souls* that they have no time to save *men* and *women*.'" Those who have the passion and compassion of Jesus will be stirred to carry out his whole program and they will coöperate to do so with joy. There will be earnestness and seriousness of purpose; there will be tenderness and tactfulness of manner; there will be patience and endurance in practice; there will be sensitiveness to every need and readiness to become adjusted to the divers and distracted relationships of life. Enthusiasm is so balanced and buoyant a disposition that it knows nothing of times and seasons. It has convictions as to the rightfulness of the cause; it has courage in the face of ridicule and calumny; it shows continuance in well-doing; it keeps its hand on the plow and its eyes looking forward until the whole field is cultivated. Just as Jesus came into the world with a redemptive passion and was swayed by it to the very last and unto the uttermost, so must it be with every Christian, who

offers not a system of morality but a heart of love.

Love always means sacrifice. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Doctor Jowett well said: "The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of bleeding hearts. If that succession be broken we lose our fellowship with the King. As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless. When our sympathy loses its pang we can no longer be the servants of the passion." But how can sympathy be shown unless we take the point of view of the other person and suffer with him in his sorrow and distress? There is nothing officious nor official but human and humane in such a Christ-inspired fellow-feeling. How can you be friendly unless you bring succor in the hour of need, even at the cost of inconvenience and discomfort? How can there be compassion unless you carry the burden on your own soul, even if it must wear you down to the point of exhaustion? Said one of old: "I will not offer unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing." What you do without effort accomplishes little. There must be wrestling in prayer, tirelessness in work, eager watchfulness for opportunities, willingness to continue although repeatedly rebuffed. This is how men have labored who got results in the home field

as well as on the mission field. Father Stanton who worked for fifty years in a congested London parish said that he preferred to be known as "an enthusiast for the love of Jesus." He thus entered vicariously into communion with Christ, for the sake of saving souls—"to displace vice by purity, hatred by love, despair by joy; working never alone, but with Jesus, and knowing this."

This truly is the spirit of the Cross, and it is indispensable for the possession and the practice of the holy passion. "Paganism is an elaborate device to do without the Cross. Yet it is ever a futile device, for the Cross is in the very grain and essence of all life; it is absolutely necessary to all permanent and satisfying gladness." So wrote Doctor John Kelman in his discerning essay on Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven." [13] This is one of the great poems of English literature and describes the persistent pursuit of God after the soul of man. The seeking God has been perfectly incarnated in Jesus Christ, and we who believe in him must in turn incarnate this spirit of the Savior in order that a lost world might be brought back to God.

This then is the great motive of the church. It is big enough and strong enough to carry far,

[13] John Kelman: *Among Famous Books*, p. 320 (Hodder & Stoughton, London).

even to the ends of the world. Where it operates, all lesser things will be shamed out of its presence. The storm of domestic strife will disappear; the rancor of denominationalism will be discounted; petty differences will be ignored. The surge and thrill of "love divine, all loves excelling" will burn out the dross of selfishness and enmity, and bring all lovers of the Lord to love men in his way, and so labor in season and out of season, to bring in that better day of universal blessedness and peace.

"Spirit of God! descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love thee as I ought to love.

"Teach me to love thee as thine angels love.
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The kindling of the heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame." [14]

[14] Read *Love in the New Testament,* by James Moffatt (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

CHAPTER SEVEN

INFORMAL TESTIMONY

THE evangelism of the early church was conducted by apostles, evangelists, prophets and teachers. But the most effective results were secured by the Christians themselves in virtue of their loyalty and courage shown in their very mode of living. "The great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries." What Professor Harnack here says about the first three centuries is relatively true of all the centuries. If this feature of informal testimony had been more conspicuous, Christian progress might have been greater. We need to recover this indispensable agency, for it is far more effective than the set ways on which so much reliance is placed by the modern church. These other ways are doubtless valuable but the preaching of Christ which carries furthest is done by men and women who in the dailiness of life "make Christ known and welcomed and beloved and adored and followed and trusted by one's fellowmen."

When Europe was under the pall of spiritual darkness, the Poor Men of Lyons carried about the torch of truth. Wyclif spread the principles of gospel liberty throughout England with the aid of his russet preachers. The local preachers of Methodism were indispensable in carrying the evangel and they were loyally supported by the followers of John Wesley. The enterprise of foreign missions which began almost simultaneously with the start of Methodism was carried out by consecrated laymen who took service in foreign ports as merchants that they might spread Christ's kingdom, without embarrassing the far too limited exchequer of the missionary society. All these devout folk and many others like them at different periods of the church's history, expressed their Christian convictions by seizing every opportunity which presented itself in their daily intercourse with people. They engaged in "wayside preaching" in the course of business and social relations. Their interest in the subject was so keen and the influence which it exercised over them was so quickening that all they did was for the glory of Christ. They found points of contact in ordinary topics, and in the most natural way they led up to the higher themes of the Christian life, and the purpose of the gospel to Christianize every vocation and

avocation. They believed in the sort of social evangelism which is at home in every walk of life, and they maintained that it was most seemly and proper to refer to it in "polite" society, as well as in what by an unnatural distinction is called "religious" society. They evidently thought it strange that anyone should object to the introduction of religion as a topic of conversation. If men talk about what they are most interested in, and welcome questions relating to politics, commerce, literature, travel, invention, but at the same time exclude the question of religion, it must be inferred that they are not interested in it. This can hardly be the case, for religion is the most permanent and persistent concern of mankind in every age. The reason why it is not frankly talked about may be because it is not the custom to do so. The notion doubtless prevails that the subject is too sacred for promiscuous discussion. The fact is that we have lost the art of religious conversation by sheer neglect and disuse.

The Apostle Paul has many counsels on this subject. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of our mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." The guiding principle

of such communications is found in the words of Jesus: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your talk will indicate your manner of life. Can it be that if you say nothing, it is because you have nothing to say? And yet you call yourself a follower of Christ. He expected his disciples to be the salt of the earth and give to society a purifying influence. He desired them to be the light of the world and dispel the darkness of error and evil. He meant them to be of a communicative disposition and to be cheerful and amiable in sharing their spiritual treasures with others.

Conversation is at once an informal and an informing medium of intercourse. If it is to delight and profit, it must have the elements of courtesy and sympathy, cordiality and interest, goodness and patience, concern and friendliness. The atmosphere must also be warm and genial, with a sense of leisureliness, free from reserve and cynicism. Conversation is not the small talk of gossip but the enlivening talk of mutual suggestiveness and good cheer. It is the kind of talk that comes spontaneously out of a full mind and a kindly heart, and brings joy and gladness. In true conversation there is a healthy give and take, and the process is exhilarating

and enjoyable. Such talkability is altogether unlike what Henry van Dyke calls "the vice of talkativeness," which is "a selfish, one-sided, inharmonious affair, full of discomfort and productive of most un-Christian feelings." What makes the correspondence between souls so attractive is the fact that the talk has to do with personal experiences in all their varied grades and stages. But it is not merely the retailing of personal items that gives spice to conversation. There must be facts of interest, bits of news that give cheer, thoughts that kindle the emotions and stir the affections. In this way the finest virtues of companionship are cultivated and fellowship widened.

All these qualities which make general conversation attractive must also appear in religious conversation. You cannot interest others in what you are not interested yourself. It is impossible to share in the gifts and graces of religious experience when one has it in doubtful or limited measure. Topics which are threadbare are as stale and distasteful as stories which are known as "chestnuts." There must be freshness and directness, reality and genuineness, warmth and welcome, heartiness and happiness, glow and gladness, cheer and charm.

"We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathising tear."

But how can we act in this fraternal manner if we are not familiar with each other's circumstances? Such knowledge is invariably obtained through conversation. It was to encourage this practice that the class meeting was organized by Wesley. Those who desired to speak often one to another came together in an informal way. They were accustomed to meet "in kitchen, or drawing room, hay-loft, coal pit or barn"; and the results more than justified its existence. The class meeting often became the germ-cell of new Methodist societies, and through it the practice of communion was delightfully expressed. "It was marked as non-sacerdotal, since in these gatherings for fellowship ordained and unordained persons dealt freely with the mysteries of the spiritual life; as experimental and practical rather than doctrinaire and controversial, for here everything was brought to the test of common experience; as ethical as well as emotional, for the members knew the conduct of one another and all combined to sustain each in such behaviour as became the gospel and Methodism; as social and gladsome with holy song, rather

than self-centred, cloistered and sombre; as free from state aid and control, as it was sustained by the regular freewill offerings of those who voltuntarily accepted its ministrations." [15]

This institution like many another has practically gone by default, but the principle for which it stood must be recognized and provision should be made to give it practical application. Its chief advantage was that it helped people to speak in a congenial atmosphere and thus fortified them to carry their testimony to the outside world. This is all the more necessary because so many Christian people surround themselves by inaccessible walls of exclusiveness and they remain silent touching the deep interests of life. Such a spirit of reserve and restraint weakens true friendship. We have become so afraid of cant and hypocrisy that there is a sentimental sensitiveness about giving oral expression to our religious feelings and desires. The well from which water is not drawn ceases to be sweet and refreshing. In like manner, if we fail to draw from the wells of religious emotion, the spiritual life suffers. Of all tragic cases are those Christians who illustrate the "law of arrested development." Let us recog-

[15] George Eayrs in *A New History of Methodism*, Vol. I. p. 289 (Hodder & Stoughton, London).

nize the causes of our distress and honestly remove them. One of these is the lack of "seasoned conversation" and "seized conversation." As we practice this manner of communion, it will be said of us what the prophet wrote of the pious at a time of depression: "They that feared the Lord spake one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." These faithful souls were confronted by a truly dark situation—the priests had become careless, the people were lax in their religious duties, the value of the worship and service of God was questioned. But these select spirits knew better, and they were determined not to surrender to harsh circumstances or to severe criticisms. They thus conversed often with each other, not about their difficulties but rather about their deliverances, so graciously granted them by the blessed God. There was no pessimistic strain which is not unusual in the modern prayer meeting. There was no tirade nor attack of those who were absent. They met not to tear down each other's faith or to weaken fidelity but to inspirit and encourage one another in every good word and work. They were persuaded that this could be done by means of hearty confession of the graciousness, tenderness and redeeming love of God. "A friendly thought," said Carlyle, "is the purest gift that

man can afford to man." Where can we obtain this to such great advantage as by rightly directed religious conversation?

Bunyan has an enlightening word in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners:* "Upon a day the good providence of God called me to Bedford, to work at my calling; and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door, in the sun, talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear their discourse, I drew near to hear what they said; for I was now a brisk talker in matters of religion, but they were far above my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God in their hearts, as also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature: they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil: moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by what means they had been afflicted; and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, and of their unbelief, and did condemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness as

filthy and insufficient to do them any good. And methought they spake as if joy did make them speak, with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world—as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbours." Notice the spirit of faith, humility and joy in the conversation of these pious women, and how it affected Bunyan who was a stranger to their blessed experience. They had "the radiance of the Christian religion," which is far from common to-day. One purpose of the Pentecostal invigoration is to impart this fullness of pardon, peace and joy. Thus shall we become more than conquerors and bear witness to the grace and goodness of God to us.

When vigorous and valiant Christian souls come together for mutual uplift they find more reasons for gratulation than for commiseration. However untoward may be their lot they are not exiles from the Christ of God. They breathe the atmosphere of mutual appreciation and hopefulness, and find solace in their fellowship one with another. They thereby become equipped for the struggles, the perils, the obstructions, the disappointments and the mishaps which inevitably come to every life. Their con-

versation moreover is so healthy because they do not evade the pressing issues but deal with essential facts and keep back nothing for fear of being censured. They do not hold off at arm's length in suspicion, but speak in trustfulness and consider how they might stir up each other to love and good works. They do not keep their hearts under lock and key and steel themselves against the approach of friendship; nor on the other hand do they wear their heart on their sleeve and let every chance acquaintance into its sanctities, which are open only to the initiated. Thus they talk freely, fearlessly and fraternally with those who are of one accord. It is done in the name of Christian friendship and for the sake of Christian fellowship, and they have no reason to regret their congenial associations. They therefore find the promise repeatedly fulfilled: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Truly, it is this realized presence of Jesus Christ which gives the tonic air to brace us up for whatever storm or stress awaits us. This is the Pentecostal blessing which quickens us to act with heroic consecration to duty, and keeps us calm and self-possessed in the face of defeat and danger. It has always been so. What the

faithful of former days discovered for themselves in the inexhaustible resources of God and made known to others, we also can experience. This is the open secret of the Gospel of the Spirit, which refreshes and strengthens us so that we have joy and confidence in the hour of felicity no less than in the hour of adversity.

Viewed at its best, the atmosphere of the world is inhospitable to spiritual ideas and ideals. There is much that is depressing and demoralizing and which offers anything but the stimulus so needed in these times of upheaval, uncertainty and disaster. "Taken all in all, where," asks Sabatier in *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit,* "shall we find a higher or more universal school of respect and virtue than in the church, a more efficacious means of comfort and consolation than the communion of brethren, a safer tutelary shelter for souls still in their minority?" One of the best ways by which these benefits of the church are to be advertised is by the publicity of informal testimony. This method of preaching Christ which brings him close to those who need him exhibits the reality, vitality and buoyancy of evangelism. Many are afflicted with anxiety, dismayed by doubt, perplexed by repressions, troubled by discords, confused by misconcep-

tions, restrained by suspicions. Tell them what you know of Christ with eagerness, earnestness and enthusiasm, that they also may be convinced of his grace and sufficiency to meet all their needs.

"Tell it out among the weeping ones that Jesus lives,
Tell it out among the weary ones what rest he gives,
Tell it out among the sinners that he still receives;

Tell it out among the highways and the lanes at home,
Let it ring across the mountains and the ocean's foam,
Like the sound of many waters, let our glad shout come!
Tell it out! Tell it out!" [16]

[16] Read *Why Preach Christ?*, by G. A. Johnston Ross (Harvard University Press, Cambridge).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PERSONAL EQUATION

OUR machine age has been criticized as an unmixed evil but who wants a return to primitive conditions? The assertions of alarmists that the machine has destroyed initiative and independence are met by the arguments of the informed, who remind us that the personal equation is even more indispensable than when labor-saving devices were at a minimum. It is significant that the worth of personality is finding larger recognition and that mass production does not suppress or destroy individuality. Those who are interested in the economic aspects of this question might read *Men and Machines* by Stuart Chase. Our interest is rather in the bearing of this subject on the propaganda of Christianity. Crowd psychology doubtless has a place in our thought but after its merits are estimated we have to consider the psychology of the individual. This was the emphasis of Jesus who always dealt with each person as a separate unit. He thus gave his best to Nicodemus and to

Zaccheus, to the Samaritan woman and to Mary Magdalene. He had more regard for their intrinsic needs than for their social and other associations. He wrestled with individuals as such and often answered not their questions but the thought back of their questions.

The approach of Jesus to life is acknowledged to be eminently sound. It is the method practiced by the skillful physician with his patient, and indeed by all who desire to obtain good results. The politician does not forget the value of the single vote at election time, even though he may ignore it the rest of the year. The effective speaker does not address his entire audience but singles out an individual here and there, and appeals to them in a sort of exclusive way and so wins the attention and accord of the rest of his hearers. Vast sums of money are spent on advertising and yet eighty per cent of the successful business is done by personal solicitation. Salesmanship is a science, nay it is an art, even the art of persuasion. Much of its efficient working depends on the pleasing personality of the solicitor, his knowledge of the goods and of the needs of the prospective buyer. All this emphasizes the significance of the personal equation. It is also necessary that we know how to discriminate because people are so widely and

radically different, and what appeals to one may by reason of temperament and associations fall flat on another. The wife of Sir Edward Burne-Jones once wrote of her husband: "As a rule Edward was a little irritated by people finding likenesses in one face to another. 'It is difference not likeness that I see,' he would say." All students of human life will endorse this sentiment, for they understand and appreciate "the sacredness of personality."

Consider how the church began. When Andrew and John were won by Jesus on that noteable night, they returned to their homes with the determination to convey to others their convictions concerning Christ the Messiah. Andrew then brought his brother Peter to Jesus, and John his brother James. Peter next led Philip to the Master, and Philip in turn guided Nathaniel to him. From that time on, through the Christian centuries, the gospel has spread through personal effort. It has often happened that obscure men have brought to Jesus those who became distinguished, and whose remarkable achievements reacted gratifyingly on their little known leaders. Think of Joel Stratton and John Gough, George Warner and Gypsy Smith, the Sunday school teacher and Dwight L. Moody, Harry Monroe and Billy Sunday. As

illustrating a chain of influences there is the case of Edward R. Graves, the commercial traveler, who won S. M. Sayford, who then won C. K. Ober, who in turn won John R. Mott, for Christ and his cause. We never know what harvest will come from the seed faithfully sown. It is the personal touch that transmits the power of the evangel. Much misunderstanding and enmity must be removed before the right atmosphere can be created, in which people will come with the request: "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Many people have curious notions concerning the church; they think of it as an institution apart from life and out of sympathy with the struggles of ordinary folk. If these outsiders are to be brought into right relationships, it will be due to work done quietly, patiently, persistently, generously by men and women, who are followers of Christ and members of the church.

It may sound trite and commonplace to say that we must have the experience of Christ's saving grace and be quickened by it to the white heat of enthusiasm before we can go out to speak to others of the Savior's redeeming love. But let the statement stand, for it is the indispensable condition of spreading the gospel of salvation. Our goodness must have edge to it, if it is to quicken others. Our experience must be vivid, if

it is to vitalize others. Our convictions must be decided, if they are to persuade others. Our efforts must be whole-hearted, if they are to affect others. Doctor W. E. Hocking rightly says: "We know religion when we meet it in persons. We are in no need of definition to guide our eyes, or to help in identifying it. We are perpetually seeing its fruits, or missing them, in our neighbors. We are sensitive even to its shades and degrees; aware of its more or less, its depth, its texture, its resistance." Again he says: "To see the significance of things trivial is the prerogative of greatness, to see everything as bearing upon the whole is both genius and happiness, to see all things *sub specie æternitatis* is the joy of religion itself." [17] It has been well said that: "A saved soul, if saved in love's name, must itself become a savior, for the spiritual life, as love conceives it, is by nature self-communicative, invasive, redemptive." If there is love in the heart, it will set you on fire to become an ardent helper of people, in everything that enables them to have an adequate share of "the leisure and pleasure and treasure of life."

The familiar story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch illustrates some of the indispens-

[17] W. E. Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 27, 134 (Yale University Press, New Haven).

able qualifications of successful personal work. Philip was chosen at the same time as Stephen, to attend to the temporal matters of the church. But it is very significant that we know hardly anything of their financial and administrative abilities. We know more of their spiritual labors. Stephen was the first martyr, impressive in speech and forcible in persuasion. Philip was an evangelist who led in the notable revival in Samaria. They were both men "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." The Christian must have a good reputation and be honorable in all his transactions, so that the finger of scorn and contempt cannot be pointed at him. He must be consistent so that his Christian profession will be manifest in his business, not only by what he says but also by what he does. Every Christian is an antiseptic—the salt of the earth —and no corruption should be tolerated in his company, whether it is the sinister speech or the crooked deal. Philip furthermore was a man of faith. When he heard the voice commanding him to go to the desert, he obeyed, nothing doubting. It meant much for him to leave the revival activities at Samaria, and go to the lonely outskirts of the desert, but he was persuaded that it was a direction of God and not a delusion of the devil. As the chariot approached, he lis-

tened to the eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah, and with exquisite tact he approached this eminent prince of Ethiopia, and obtained his consent to act as his interpreter of the prophet's utterances concerning the suffering Messiah. Philip was in such harmony with the divine Spirit, that he was able intuitively to understand this man's needs. He was also in sympathy with him and showed patience and frankness as he led this seeker, step by step, to Jesus Christ.

Many objections raised against personal work are purely theoretical. They are generally offered by those who have neither a correct idea of the purpose of the gospel nor a clear experience of its power in their own lives. I do not mean to say that you will be received with a welcome in every case, as was the happy experience of Philip with the eunuch. You may even be insulted; but if you have the patience and insight of Jesus, you will know how to take these slights, and instead of being readily discouraged, you will be spurred to continue and increase in the good work. If repelled and turned down by one, you may be welcomed by another. Be frank and faithful, be true and tactful, be earnest and enlightening, be friendly and interesting, and you will surely have the joy of winning people,

one by one, for Christ and the kingdom of God. The story of the mission field is one continued commentary on the indispensable value of the personal touch in inducing non-Christians to consider and accept the claims of Christ. Read *Christ at the Round Table* and note what Stanley Jones reports of the success in winning for Christ the mind and heart of Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists and other non-Christians. *The Life of Henry Drummond,* by George Adam Smith has several chapters, showing the unique qualities of Drummond in dealing with inquirers, not only in connection with the mission of Moody but also in his own work among college men. Principal Smith writes: "He (Drummond) worked hard in the inquiry rooms, but shy men, who would not stand up in a meeting, nor enter an inquiry room, waited for him by the doors as he came out, or waylaid him in the street, or wrote, asking him for an interview. He took great trouble with every one of them, as much trouble and interest as if each was a large meeting." On a man being asked what led him to decide for Christ, he replied, "It was the way Mr. Drummond laid his hand on my shoulder and looked me in the face that led me to Christ." This testimony throws much light on what Drummond wrote in his essay on "Spir-

itual Diagnosis." He pointed out that the Puritan writers were skilled analysts of human nature but that, "they seem to have applied their power more in the pulpit than the pew. They knew so much about humanity that they had lost what of it they had themselves in the pursuit of it in others. They were most of them wanting in that delicacy of handling which makes analysis effective instead of insulting; and many of the Puritans were quite destitute of the foremost quality which distinguishes the successful diagnosist—respect, veneration even, for the soul of another. A man may be ever so gross and vulgar, but when you come to deal with the deepest that is in him, he becomes sensitive and feminine. Brusqueness and an impolite familiarity may do very well when dealing with his brains, but without tenderness and courtesy you can only approach his heart to shock it. The whole of etiquette is founded on respect; and by far the highest and tenderest etiquette is the etiquette of soul and soul."

The joy of personal work, only they know who have performed it. It was said of Father Stanton of St. Alban's, London, that individual work lay nearest to his hand and his heart, and that, "he excelled in personal ministration to individual souls, and especially to the souls of men." The

testimonial which was presented to him, signed by over three thousand six hundred men, contained this striking sentence: "It has been not only the charm of your speech which has drawn us to you, but, what is of course of far higher value—the depth of reality of your religious teaching, your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and your conspicuous ability to enter with sympathy into our thoughts and needs, and into all that which at this time makes faith and life difficult for men." Sympathy means insight and understanding of human needs. How divers these are! Each individual case must be studied separately and independently, with a view to finding out the temperament, habits, preferences and aptitudes of each one. The way to one will be prepared by a letter, to another by making a special appointment, to yet another by invitation to a meal or to a religious service. In these ways the point of contact is secured. All this means energy, toil and sacrifice; but surely it is worth while to have the privilege of witnessing the coming of the light of heaven into a soul and the expression of glow upon the countenance.

"In Christianity there is the human touch and, after all, that is what men need." So wrote Sheppard in *The Impatience of a Parson.* This is the pressing need of people in every land and this

touch is to be transmitted by Christ-filled men and women. The urgency of this special form of work is patent when it is recalled that two-thirds of the population of the United States have no definite connection with any of the churches. Their interest can be aroused if at all not by proxy but in person. The summons is clear and imperative, and we dare not evade it on any plea or pretext whatsoever. Effective evangelism is individual evangelism, for the success of the whole church depends upon the fidelity of each and every member.

There are two words in the gospels which must be emphasized and reiterated. The first word is "Come," and find rest unto your souls. The second word is "Go," and disciple others, so that they also may obtain this rest. "Come" is an invitation in the name of the gospel of blessed redemption. "Go" is a command for the sake of this same gospel, which offers its benefits to everyone, that all may find and receive the love and joy of God unto everlasting life. It has in mind the reconstruction of the life of the individual and also that of society, in accord with the principles and the spirit of Jesus. Where such an ideal and inspiration are in control, there will be produced a better type of nationalism and internationalism in all their manysided

bearings on education, commerce, and the general welfare of the whole race. Truly, "how great a forest is kindled by how small a fire!"

"Go, labour on; spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will;
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?" [18]

[18] Read *Disciple Winners*, by Christian F. Reisner (The Abingdon Press, New York).

CHAPTER NINE

FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

THE true church is known by its animation and not by its ancestry. It is doubtless gratifying to be related to a heroic past but unless the church continues to show vitality, versatility and adaptability, such as distinguished the former days, its claims to continuity will make no impression. Apostolic succession is to be proved not by ecclesiastical dogma but by apostolic success which gives evidence that the church has the authentic signs of the life of the Spirit. In this sense the church is the fellowship of Christ-filled souls who are animated by the Pentecostal passion to give Christ the right of way in their own lives and to make him acceptable to all lives. Their experience of salvation impels them to extend its benefits everywhere. "All at it and always at it" was the motto of John Wesley. This is in perfect harmony with the spirit of Christian fidelity through all the centuries. Such a dominating purpose of loyalty to the living Christ is the final argument of spiritual affinity,

whatever different methods may be employed to advance it.

When Jethro the priest of Midian visited Moses, the leader of the Exodus rehearsed to his father-in-law the wonderful works the Lord God wrought on behalf of the Israelites. The past was glorious with acts of redemption; but the future was going to be still more glorious. And so he invited Jethro to identify himself with this promising movement, saying to him: "Come thou with us and we will do thee good." When he hesitated, Moses appealed to him and said that if he did not care to enlist for his own sake, let him do it for Israel's sake. That won him. Can the church use this twofold appeal to-day? Most assuredly it can. Its record on the whole has been satisfactory throughout the centuries, but the work that it must undertake during the coming days is to be far greater, out of all proportion to anything that has been attempted and achieved since the day of Pentecost. But it needs Christians of energy and endurance to achieve the desired results.

In what ways is the church to do good? By giving a sense of the reality of God, an experience of the redemption of Christ, a consciousness of the power of the Holy Spirit. This will clarify the spiritual and moral values of life and

convey courage to bear a steady witness to the whole truth of Christ. All who enter within the glowing circle of church fellowship will at once know that here is a company of men and women, whose controlling purpose in life is to make their church a minister of grace, a distributor of kindness, a companion of the discouraged, an inspirer of the weak, a guide to the Savior, and a never-failing refuge to all who desire God and redemption. Whether the promise of doing good is a matter of words and phrases, or whether it is a matter of deeds will soon be discovered by those who accept the invitation and enter within the portals of the church. If the church fails here, it is of doubtful advantage, whatever else it may do incidentally or in eleemosynary ways. The reason for this lies in the undisputed fact that the very genius of Christianity compels its adherents to become missionaries, and to witness to its benefits by word and deed. The gospel is essentially social and the spirit of obligation is one of its cardinal features. This truth has lately found convincing expression in the phrase "social evangelism," which addresses itself to the business, not of saving an occasional brand from the burning, but of transforming all the conditions which affect character and of helping in its freer and fuller development.

Christianity operates as the law of love, and the church is its living exponent. It enlists the services of every member by the constraint of this penetrating principle and lays upon each one the unescapable responsibility to be influenced by it and to commend it in most favorable ways to every person. The priesthood of all believers is the New Testament privilege which excludes none. Every Christian has free access to the mercy seat in the name of the great Mediator. Every Christian, moreover, can act as a priest to lead men to God. Thus John Nelson, mason and soldier, and John Hunt, plowboy, were as much the priests of God as John Wesley. Saul of Tarsus enjoyed the priestly help of Ananias, Luther received that of Staupitz, Alexander Maclaren that of Benjamin Gregory, Moody that of his Sunday school teacher. This is a privilege within the reach of every Christian who should take advantage of it without professionalism or officialism, but in a kindly, cheerful and natural manner. We can readily imagine the power of a church whose membership is distinguished by such Christian character and caliber.

The question of spiritual atmosphere is momentous. Just as atmosphere is all-important in the world of nature and without it the farmer must plow in vain, and sow his seed for naught,

so also the vital glow of spiritual atmosphere is indispensable in the church, and nothing else can take its place. Now, atmosphere is a matter of personality. It is created by men and women, who realize that, in Christ, they are members one of another. People are at times heard to say that they cannot go to church, as long as a particular person attends. We may resent this as an excuse or a presumptious criticism, and tell the objectors that the presence of the persons to whom they take exception should not interfere with their enjoyment of the worship of God. But that does not remove the unfortunate situation. Worship is a social exercise and it thrives only in a warm atmosphere. The person criticized, if deserving of it, lowers the spiritual temperature, and in his company a disagreeable feeling creeps over one, like the slimy feeling that you have on a damp, dull day, with the chills running up and down your back. Just as you do not expect people in winter to come to church and be comfortable in a building that is not heated, so you must not expect people, especially outsiders, to attend church under circumstances which are both undesirable and intolerable.

The church must be the heartiest, the friendliest, the happiest place in the community. Friendship is what the world most needs, more

especially in these days when hearts are being tried, when the vision is clouded, when a sense of loss and bereavement is common, when a spirit of foreboding meets us on every hand. Since the church is a brotherhood, the members are bound to one another by family ties. In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, which is the earliest New Testament writing, we read that as soon as the people in this city became Christians, their relations to one another underwent a radical change; and this fact is assumed in the way the apostle addresses them. "Concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you; for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren." Peter exhorts in his first epistle: "Be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded." John is very decided in his first epistle: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethen." "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." All these counsels are reflections of the teaching and practice of Jesus. In the upper room, among his parting words to them were these: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also

love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The reason why this spirit of love is so repeatedly exalted is because its practice is difficult and also distinctive of the true Christian. This is the secret of genuine fellowship, when souls hold commerce with each other and find both pleasure and profit in one another's company.

This test is accepted in theory but what about its practical workings? Doctor Jefferson is not severe when he writes: "Many city churches are made up of people who do not know one another, and who do not even want to know one another. Too many village churches are composed of people who know one another, and are sorry that they do. The weakness of the modern church lies in its dwarfed affections. The shame of present-day Christianity is its stunted sympathies. The church is rich in money, ideas, apparatus, numbers, but poor in love." [19] A representative layman, G. W. Pepper, is quite frank: "The man in the pulpit may do much to hasten a revival of the spirit of democracy within the church by reiterating our Lord's plain teachings upon this subject. But after all

[19] Charles E. Jefferson: *The Building of the Church*, pp. 52, 60 (The Macmillan Company, New York).

it rests with the man in the pew to eliminate snobbishness from congregational life and to make democracy once more a test of discipleship." [20] The hospitality which welcomes the stranger for what he is rather than for what he has; the courtesy and cordiality shown to the members regardless of their social or economic condition; the graciousness of kindness turned towards those deprived of the encouragements of life—such behavior is the best sort of publicity for the church.

It is tantalizingly misleading to have the words, "Friendly Church," printed on the bulletin board outside, unless the reality is exemplified by those inside. One test of a church's usefulness is that of the opinion of the community concerning it. What do the non-church goers think of us? Or have we become such a negligible quantity that they do not think of us at all? Assuredly in every church there are faithful souls; but our purpose must be to increase this number and strengthen the leaven of loving-kindness. This work summons our best powers, to which everyone should consecrate ability and time. The smug self-satisfaction of the average church-member is pathetic. Not many have

[20] George W. Pepper: *A Voice from the Crowd*, p. 120 (Yale University Press, New Haven).

really grasped the meaning of discipleship, which means to take up the cross daily and to follow Christ. Most of them think that they have discharged their obligations when they attend the church service, provided nothing else interferes, and when they contribute to the support of the work, according to their inclinations. Let the faithful rouse themselves to a sense of their exacting responsibility and take no rest from prayer and from toil, until the church shall always and everywhere do the work of evangelism.

It is acknowledged by everyone that the minister must be a pastor and keep in close touch with his people and be quickly at their side in times of trouble. Doctor R. F. Horton in his moving *Autobiography*, refers to this part of ministerial work in most impressive terms. "Often I have visited for four or five hours at a time, until I was quite spent, and my tongue could do no more. For twenty years I have kept up this practice. For some unexplained reason this part of a minister's work is always laborious and uncongenial, and a thousand excuses are at hand for surrendering it. But facing it *invitâ Minervâ,* week by week for many years, I have come to regard it as the indispensable function of suc-

cessful church work." [21] Doctor Morrison frankly declared: "To me pastoral work is the crown of my ministry. I used to love books much more than people, but now I love people a great deal better than books. I long for the day when I shall have more time to spend daily in the homes of my flock." [22]

There is another side to this question in order that success may be complete. Pastoral work must also be undertaken by the members of the church, and visits made in the homes, not only of those who are congenial, but also of those who are not quite so agreeable. If preachers find it to be arduous, the laity will not find it to be different, but it is the kind of work that is worth while and which has rich compensations. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" As Christians, it is our privilege to love the unlovely, and to do good to both the just and the unjust, for we pattern our lives after the higher standards of our blessed Savior. Think of some of the benefits from such work. Some have got out of the way of coming to church. An informal visit from one or two church members will at least

[21] Robert F. Horton: *An Autobiography*, p. 163 (George Allen and Unwin, London).

[22] Alexander Gammie: *Dr. George H. Morrison.* His Life and Work, p. 179 (Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York).

get them to feel that they are not forgotten and it may rouse them to a sense of their negligence and win them back. Others are sick or in difficulty of one sort or another. It is expected that the minister will visit them, but it is not supposed that anyone else will do so. All the more reason why a call of sympathy and friendship will be welcome. Some feel that they are slighted or that they are not wanted, and that nobody cares for them, because perchance they are poor and cannot give much. Naturally they are sensitive and need attention. Then there are people who move from one town to another, who often lose interest in the church in their new place of residence. Their interest might be enlisted by a friendly visit. Let the stranger be made welcome into our church home, not only when he happens to attend but before he does so and afterwards. What a wonderful uplift will come into the lives of these folk by the quiet and interested notice which they receive. Be pleasant and do not act like Job's comforters. If you go to the sick, do not add to their troubles by discussing the ills of life and going into all manner of blood-curdling details. Always remember that you are a representative of Jesus Christ and his church. Have the evangelical temper and graces. Show the joy of the Christian life.

Such good-will visits afford fine opportunities not only to say a word for the church but also to make a timely plea for Christ, as the occasion may suggest and your common sense may direct. These reactions of friendliness are always profitable. How often we hear it said that the only time church people make visits is when they want cake or cash. This produces the unfortunate impression that the church is more interested in what it can get than in what it has to offer of spiritual incentive and stimulus. The Apostle Paul declared that he bore his testimony to Christ not only in public but "from house to house." Such a practice was common in the early church as also in periods of revival when Christians were quickened to go after the unsaved. No one was overlooked or neglected but everyone was given a fair chance to hear directly from witnesses the good news of the Gospel. This is the principle of Visitation Evangelism which has worked successfully in many places. The laity go in teams of two or more to visit in the homes and to win the people to Christ. There is nothing spectacular in this method but it has seldom failed to produce profound impressions. Indeed, many have responded favorably to this sort of appeal for Christ and the church. Our contacts with people to win them depends upon the in-

tensity of faith, the fervency of hope, the sincerity of love purified and enriched by the Eternal Spirit.

"Let none hear you idly saying,
'There is nothing I can do,'
While the souls of men are dying,
And the Master calls for you:
Take the task he gives you gladly;
Let his work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when he calleth,
'Here am I, send me, send me.'" [23]

[23] Read *Adventures in Visitation Evangelism*, by A. Earl Kernahan (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York).

CHAPTER TEN

THE BOOK OF LIFE

THREE exhortations unfold the purpose of the Bible. "Have faith in God." "Hope thou in God." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." These three words contain the assurance that what is thus urged is practicable. Nowhere in the Bible is any attempt made to prove the existence of God or to argue that he can be known. The writers of these sixty-six books had a direct intuition of the reality and sovereignty of God. His presence was recognized in the course of Nature, in the life of individuals, in the history and activities of nations. His purpose was made known by saints and seers, who declared the authentic revelation with cogent persuasiveness. What we here read of the immediate impact of God is the verification of experience and not the peradventures of speculation. This conviction is expressed differently, as might be expected in a literature that

contains history, biography, poetry, drama, letters, essays, proverbs, parables. It furthermore deals with many subjects such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, prophecy, prayer, praise.

They all bear upon the one central theme of the personality, the providence, and the purity of God. They testify that the universe is friendly, that there is a spiritual purpose, a moral order, a social idealism which derive from God, who responds to the deepest desires of men and stimulates their realization. This holy Being is not the projection of the imagination, nor the rationalization of the intellectual process, nor the personification of the forces of Nature, nor the transfiguration of the human will. He is the Spiritual Reality active in and through all things. This is the assertion of religion although its conceptions have varied all along the line, from animatism, animism, polytheism, pantheism and monotheism to the sublime faith in the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This conclusion is so completely given in the Bible that it is acknowledged to be the best utterance concerning the Evangel of God for every age.

Indeed the Bible is preëminently *the* book of religion. It is the record of the self-disclosure of God to man, of the response of man to God and

of the resulting responsibility between men in their individual, social, national and international relationships. Think of the Bible as biography, and it excels in the analysis of character, taking note not only of "the greater men and women," but also of the lesser known, who belong to the rank and file. Think of it as history, and you find in its pages the gradual unfolding of the life of nations, particularly of one nation, in everything that concerns their best welfare. Think of it as a volume of devotion, and nowhere can you find more rapturous utterances of the human spirit, in its ascent towards the mount of vision and triumph. The Bible has only recently been recognized as a missionary book, proclaiming the consolation of humanity, in notes of conviction and assurance. It is also the book of revivals and reformations, and a most profitable study of it can be made on this subject. Those interested in literature can obtain from the Bible far greater benefits than from the ancient classics, as Moulton has so conclusively shown in his suggestive volume, *The Literary Study of the Bible*. This aspect of it can be supplemented with great advantage by a study of the influence of the Bible on literature, which impressively demonstrates that these writings of power have molded the world's

civilization. Our study of the Bible, from whatever point of view, will be limited, unless we learn to regard it as the revelation of the purpose of God for the redemption of humanity. It is "the record of the pre-eminent meetings of God with men, and the direct reflections of the supreme revelation in Christ."

It would save us considerable difficulty if we regard this select literature from its own standpoint. Many of our troubles with the Bible are due to inadequate theories, which have not reckoned with all the facts. Thanks to the devoted labors of modern scholarship, we are learning that questions of date, authorship and literary composition are incidental, and do not affect the vital truths. The critical study of the Bible does not lessen our appreciation and reverence for it, any more than botanical study would give us less pleasure and profit from flowers and plants. In fact, as a result of constructive Biblical criticism, we have a bigger and better Bible, because we have a clearer conception of the development of spiritual truth, from its dim beginnings in pre-historic times up to the perfect revelation in Jesus Christ. Another significant benefit is that since the divine revelation came through the human experience of elect souls, who had high commerce with God, the Bible must be judged

in terms of life and not of logic. This means a great deal because religion is a personal matter; and the experience which grows out of it, is rich and vigorous, in the measure of the direct fellowship with God.

The Bible then is a criterion from experience, giving us a standard by which to regulate our own lives. On the other hand, it is tested by human experience. We acknowledge its authority where it finds and satisfies the needs and desires of our heart. But of course, we remember that our best experience, at any stage, is limited, with vast possessions of spiritual blessing yet to be appropriated. But we shall also find that in every advance the Bible maintains its leadership. We have found some parts of this precious volume more attractive because more helpful than other parts. Without hardly being aware of it, we accept one of the canons of criticism and treat the book with historical and spiritual perspective. For instance, literary experts first declare as to the distinction of Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Emerson, Browning and other leading lights of literature; but their word alone is not final. These writers have won their place by reason of intrinsic merit, which is recognized by the people at large. In the same way, the authority of the Bible is not finally determined by the find-

ings of councils or the conclusions of scholars, but by the consensus of testimony of Christian men and women, who have used the book and find in their own experience that it has met their needs. In this sense, the Bible must be discovered by each generation for itself. We must not depend on tradition although this voice of the past it not to be discarded. Just as secondhand religion is worthless for purposes of testimony, so the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God on the strength of ecclesiastical verdicts carries no weight, unless we have found out for ourselves that it is "a lamp unto our feet and light unto our path." It is the personal note that gives such force to the meditations and prayers of the Golden Psalm which has reference to the law. But what is true of the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, as a testimony from experience, is equally true of the whole Bible, whose real worth is endorsed by living witnesses. Well might Sabatier say: "It is the book above all books, light of the conscience, bread of the soul, leaven of all reforms. It is the lamp that hangs from the arched roof of the sanctuary, to give light to those who are seeking God. The destiny of holiness on earth is irrevocably linked with the destiny of the Bible.."

The chief use of the Bible is for the culture of

the religious life and the growth of character. Protestantism does not make as much of books of devotion as does Roman Catholicism. The reason is that the Bible is its preëminent book of devotion. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." Such a service has been rendered by the Bible wherever its voice has been heard; but we are compelled to confess that it has often been muffled. Phillips Brooks correctly observed that, "religious people read thin, superficial books of religious sentiment, but do not meet face to face the strong, exacting, masculine pages of their Bibles." The most subtle dangers to which the church is exposed come from ignorance of the Bible. There is no other substitute as an aid to the best growth in character and influence. "I have been seriously perplexed to know," said Professor Huxley, "how the religious feeling which is the essential basis of conduct can be kept up without the use of the Bible." Doctor R. F. Horton once remarked, "It is the unhappy delusion of the church that it knows the teaching of Jesus." How we can call ourselves the disciples of the Master and yet have so confused an understanding of his

truth, is not only marvelous but tragic. Herein is one reason why such a small percentage of Christians bear their testimony in personal work to lead others to Christ. If we are familiar with the redemptive purpose of God as interpreted by prophets and apostles, an increasing appreciation of its message will inevitably constrain us to share the blessings of salvation with others.

Wherever the Bible is read with enlightenment and earnestness, there cannot be damage from sectarianisms and fanaticisms. All the fantastic and onesided cults are based on erroneous conceptions of the method and character of revelation. History is treated as allegory, prophecy is confused with mantic prognostications, numbers are made to unravel unfathomable mysteries, apocalypse is regarded with gross literalness. Alas, the Bible is still read by those who wrest it to their own confuion and undoing. The Holy Spirit was not promised to give us the truth but to lead us into the truth. Such illumination does not dispense with the exercise of our own faculties, but makes it all the more obligatory that we use reason, conscience, heart and will in becoming directly and practically acquainted with the oracles of God. We hold, at least in theory, that an intelligent and regular study of the Book is vital to Christian life, but the fact is that the

personal use of the Bible is far from common among us. We treat it with respect, and praise it, and present it as gifts bound in morocco with gilt edges. We give it a central place on the parlor table and even have a vase of flowers upon it. If there is a Family Bible the outstanding events are inscribed on a page for that purpose, so that the Book is consulted not for daily guidance but as a register of births, deaths and marriages. All this is acceptable but there is a more valuable use for the Book of Life.

When the Apostle Paul was driven out of Thessalonica, he went to the neighboring town of Berea. Here he was given a cordial welcome. The atmosphere was calm and judicious, free from ignorant antagonism. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed." The reference is to the word of the gospel, telling of Jesus the Messiah and of his work of redemption from sin. The spirit and attitude of these people are worthy of our imitation in the use of the Bible, which in a large sense is the Word of God. The Bereans were noble in character; they were serious, open-minded, unprejudiced, seeking the truth and ready to welcome it

from whichever source it came. The fact that Paul and Silas were not ecclesiastically authorized made no difference to these inquirers. It was more important to give attention to what they said, especially as there was a note of conviction and confidence in their speech. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," is a good resolution with regard to the Bible, for it implies willingness to give time and thought to its study in all of its bearings. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians, he exhorted them to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Just as the Bereans gave themselves to examination of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, so should we treat the whole Bible. "God's message to the human soul," as Doctor John Watson (Ian Maclaren) called it, challenges our most cordial and respectful consideration.

Some necessary qualifications are demanded of every Bible student. (a) Intelligence must be shown by the exercise of thought and the cultivation of memory. Intellectual effort of the best is none too good, to understand the mind of God which is unraveled in the Bible, and which has been made accessible to us by the great scholars of the church. (b) Confidence must be given to the testimony of the Scriptures. Think of the noble company of men and women who were

directed, comforted and inspired to faithful living, as they accepted the promises, heeded the precepts and followed the program for world redemption, found in the Bible. This book has never failed anyone, the leading scholars and historians being witness thereto; and their verdicts have been confirmed by the saints, who in a question like this always have the last word. (c) Perseverance is another quality to be cultivated. The Bible must be read daily. It is like the manna which had to be gathered day by day. It is like the mercies of God which are new every morning. Those who know, declare that the regular study of the book brings spiritual replenishment and refreshment, unlike that obtained from any other book. (d) The whole Bible, if read at the rate of a chapter a day, can be finished in two years and nine months. But we are not concerned in getting through the book so much as getting its ideas and ideals, in order that they might govern our lives.

No haphazard reading will do this, but only a plan of study can secure the best results. There must be what Bishop Handley C. G. Moule called continuous "under-surface" study of the Bible, or what an ancient writer described as "burrowing in" the Word of God. Read it in sympathy with its high ideals and be inspired by

them. Read it with reverence, intent on hearing the voice of God who speaks directly through its pages. Read it intensively. Take the Gospel of Mark or the Epistle of James and concentrate on it till you understand its thought and are possessed by its spirit. Read it historically. If you select the first part of Isaiah, find out the social, political and religious conditions, with the help of such a volume like that by George Adam Smith in the Expositor's Bible series. You will then not only comprehend the burning message of the prophet but also understand how to apply it to your own life and times. If you select the Epistle to the Galatians, learn of the temperament and circumstances of that people and the temptations before which they fell, as discussed by Adeney in the *New-Century Bible* series or by Arthur S. Peake in his *Introduction to the New Testament.* You will then appreciate the vigorous appeals of the apostle and know how to apply the teachings of this letter to the life of nominal, impulsive or loyal Christians in the modern church. This means well directed work, but then no one has ever stumbled into truth. Above all read the Bible prayerfully. It is a spiritual book, the greatest of its kind. Its teachings can be spiritually understood only by those who have the devotional temper. This will en-

able them to realize the presence of God in the Scriptures and to experience that same presence in their own life. Let it be further said that how much to study or how to study largely depends on individual circumstances. You may observe the morning watch or the evening hour. It makes little difference whether you get your lunch at a buffet counter or seated at a table, so long as your hunger is satisfied. The same is true as to feeding your soul from day to day, which may be done on the train, in the boat or in the quiet of your home. Be sure, however, that you are really nourished.

A knowledge of the Bible is a wonderful help in times of need. When you are dismayed, think of Elijah's experience; when perplexed, recall the guidance given to Abraham; when answers to prayer are delayed, remind yourself of Jesus in Gethsemane or Paul supplicating for the removal of the thorn in the flesh; when religiously indifferent or at a low state of spiritual temperature, turn to the Psalms, or the Gospels, or the Book of Acts which tells of the enthusiasm of the early Christians in the face of harsh handicaps. One argument for the excellence of the Bible is that sermons on Shakespeare, Browning, Tennyson and current topics quickly run their course. But preaching which is based on the Bible never

palls, and we never fail to rejoice in the unadulterated riches of the wisdom and love of God. In reviewing his ministry of thirty years, Doctor John Watson said that he found that while people appreciate literature in the preachers, they do not desire literature for the subjects of the pulpits; and that, "while they do not undervalue information on the Bible, they are ten thousand times more grateful for the inspiration of the book."

For our present purpose it is worth recalling that every notable revival in the history of the church has been preceded by a rediscovery of the Bible and the placing of it in the hands of the laity. John Wyclif with his popular translation of the Scriptures was a terror to corrupt ecclesiastics. John Hus made vigorous evangelistic appeals with the aid of the Bible. The edition of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus was a mighty weapon in the hands of Luther. The German translation by the great reformer himself helped considerably in the spread of the principles of Protestantism. Tyndale's version of the English Bible, followed by the King James version prepared the way for the Evangelical Revival. And last but not least, the work of our modern scholars has made it possible for us to see the manifold message of the Book, that it

contains much more than a "few lines of evangelical doctrine and special providence"; and to believe with Pastor Robinson, when he declared to the Pilgrim Fathers. "I am convinced that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Holy Word." Well might it be said that, "the Bible is the true panacea for a corrupt Christianity and the best bulwark of a holy religion." Become familiar with its message. Be faithful to its mandates. Bear its truths to others. Give it a full chance, and it shall yet win trophies for the Savior and Lord of us all.

"Within that awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries!
Happiest they of human race,
To whom God has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn." [24]

[24] Read *The Authority of the Bible*, by C. H. Dodd (Harper & Brothers, New York).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EDUCATION AND EVANGELISM

It is a chronic complaint that the young people of to-day are worse than those of yesterday. Such a criticism was registered in the cuneiform tablets dated 3700 B.C., and a similar declaration was made by the Methodist bishops in 1824 A.D. An investigation of the facts show that such statements are out of focus. If we are reaping a poor harvest is it not partly due to the defective conditions in sowing the seed? When we condemn the present are we not virtually condemning the past out of which it has come? If the young people are frivolous are their parents much better? *Race Attitudes in Children* by Bruno Lasker is a coöperative study of existing conditions in the United States. One of the conclusions of this investigation is that "reëducation of adults must precede the education of children." The crux of the whole matter is stated in these pertinent words: "In our time, as in no other, conscious education in school, church and home is saturated with unreality. The child is

expected to admire values that count little in the life that surrounds him. The moral training is verbalistic and removed from the realities of daily life—or else artificially approximated to it in ways which the child does not recognize as reflections of the social obligations which adults recognize as guides to their own behavior." [25]

Samuel S. Drury in *Fathers and Sons* has some stinging remarks about the failure of the home based upon his experience as headmaster of a boys' school. He asks: "Is it 'passing the buck' for schools to declare that they are pretty nearly powerless without backing from home?" Any criticism is to the good only when the dissatisfaction looks towards improvement and works for it. Let us beware of the fallacy of alarmism which sees the tares and overlooks the wheat. Here as in so many other places, we are prone to deal with our problems at second hand in the light of previous solutions, as though the last word had been said. Our business is not to perpetuate forms but to propagate faith which is a vital experience.

The sanctity of personality taught by Jesus is being rediscovered and the best insights of modern education are in accord with his teachings.

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[25] Bruno Lasker: *Race Attitudes in Children*, p. 371 (Henry Holt and Company, New York).

Subjects and methods of study should reckon with the mental and moral development of students who might thereby achieve the benefits of discipline and freedom. The primary task of a university is to break up men's dogmatism and give them a universal point of view. This exacting but liberal view is seldom realized because we are the creatures of fixed ideas and hesitate to shift our anchorage from established moorings. In defense of our practice we might quote the Italian proverb: "He who leaves the old paths for the new knows what he leaves, not what he may find." But pioneers into the unfamiliar might reply that the purpose is not necessarily to renounce the old in favor of the new but to merge the old in the new. Why not read the old in the new and the new in the old without hair-splitting casuistries which needlessly antagonize older believers with the newer generation and vice versa? The essential foundation is the same but there are unplumbed treasures of knowledge and wisdom in Christ whose fullness has not yet been exhausted. The better way is to avoid the extremes and steer between the Scylla of credulity and the Charybdis of scepticism.

There are some in the church who cannot distinguish between the Fact of Christ and interpretations of that Fact; they fear that a change

of interpretation is a virtual disparagement of the authority of our blessed Lord. Others again in the church are ready for novel theories regardless of the legacy of faith and fidelity; they need to be reminded that "the wastefulness of reaction against the past is a grave impediment to the progress of man." Both suffer from the illusion of partial and onesided views, which can be overcome by the insight of hope made possible by mature and balanced thinking. This is practicable by the illumination of the divine Spirit, not for purposes of speculation, but of the evangelization and Christianization of the world. Spiritual earnestness without the open mind is as much of a handicap as intellectual keenness without evangelical fervor. How fatal then to divide the church into competing camps because of refusal to recognize the continuity of faith which provides for larger discoveries in the Opulent Christ!

The principle of comprehension without compromise is particularly applicable to the educational task of the church. Doctor Charles E. Raven in *Christ and Modern Education,* points out that we have failed in making the desirable impact for Christ upon the mind and heart of youth because we have not distinguished between instruction and education, because much of our

instruction has given a false impression of the nature of religion against which there has later been a revolt, and above all because teachers of religion have contradicted in practice what they expounded in theory.[26] How else could we explain the arresting fact that only twenty per cent of the membership of the Church School make the decision for Christ and join the church? Many who drop out of the school belong to the golden period of life, between thirteen and twenty-one, when they sorely need guidance to make life decisions which are truly decisive. A business that regularly fails where most profit is expected is clearly conducted on a wrong basis. This recurrent leakage betrays lack of efficiency and economy. Our concern in these circumstances is not to save the lost but to save the loss.

There are many reasons for this perplexing situation. The chief one is that the church has not yet grasped Christ's conception of childhood. He held that all children belong to God. Brushing aside the officious interference of his disciples on one occasion, he said: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." Bishop William Taylor was in accord with this sentiment of

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[26] Charles E. Raven: *Christ and Modern Education,* pp. 44ff (Henry Holt and Company, New York).

the Master, when he held up an African child before an American audience and said, "There are no heathen children." He meant that by nature none of them are aliens from God, and that it is we who by our ignorance and neglect alienate them from the heavenly Father. "The child should grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise." So wrote Horace Bushnell in his thought-provoking book, *Christian Nurture*. His idea was that our purpose must be not to save children for God, but to keep them for God all their days. To be sure, we accept this theory but our practice contradicts it and so we belittle the importance of conserving childlife and we wait until adult age before putting forth earnest efforts to win them for Christ. Children recognize Jesus as their Friend and receive him as such. The aim of religious education must then be to reconstruct the purpose of each child, in harmony with his growing Christian intelligence and experience. This means that there will be a progressive renewing of the mind, a strengthening of the will and the forming of good habits. All this will react on the character and conduct of the pupil. This method further implies the cultivation of life relationships in the name of our Father and Savior, whose purpose of redemptive love to all man-

kind is thus shared by us. This quiet way is doubtless not spectacular, and the achievements may not be chronicled to the satisfaction of ardent statisticians. But it is the final result that counts, and those with the long vision are the ultimate winners.

You cannot raise corn in midwinter or cultivate sweet potatoes in a swamp. This is the truth which the Great Teacher expounded in the Parable of the Soils. The wayside student is careless, indifferent and listless; the one likened to the stony ground is superficial and has spasmodic interests because of a vagrant mind; he who is compared to the thorny ground has mixed motives and engages in a struggle between indifference and interest, generally in the adolescent period; the good ground student is attentive and receptive. The background of each of these must be understood so that the helps or handicaps experienced between the class sessions may be intelligently reckoned with. A great deal will have to be unlearned before the real facts are known. The great business of the teacher is "to open the gates of life for the pupils." Everything must subserve this aim or the purpose of religious education is defeated. "Whether we scan the heavens, penetrate the depths of the sea, pore over the pages of books, or look into the minds and hearts

of men, we are striving after an interpretation of life." But life must first be understood for there is no standardized method of approach to everyone, and the teacher who attempts it is like one playing a hit or miss game. One child is plastic, sanguine and quickly responsive: another is impulsive, changeable, and at times unreliable: yet another is phlegmatic, dull and finds it difficult to grasp the truth, but he is possessed of heroic and enduring qualities. These differences are determined not only by temperament but also by age, sex, education and upbringing. Each scholar must therefore be treated separately with the insight of sympathy and patience.

"The more one thinks of it," said J. Brierley, "the more plainly it appears that in all regions of thought, religious, scientific, artistic, literary, the question of questions, the pivot on which everything turns, is personality. The personal life is the ultimate life, the personal interest the ultimate interest." This is true of youth as well as of adult life, for "the child is father of the man." We shall fail unless we reckon with all the facts. To put old heads on young shoulders is unnatural because contrary to the laws of growth and development. Where this is attempted the result is only a make-believe with damaging reactions on character. The child or the youth

should therefore be taught only what will most directly benefit him and what will in turn become seed for the harvest of the future years.

It is repeatedly asserted that Jesus gave principles and avoided any specific code of living with rules and regulations. This is doubtless correct but principles without a setting are as vaporous as a soul without a body. Lasker is therefore right that "principles are the deposits of experience, and are most reliable where experience has been richest and has been analyzed most thoroughly and objectively, so that causal trends can definitely be recognized." This is the thought of the project method in education. Its plea for "operational thinking" is made on behalf of linking thought with action by the method of experimentation. It deals with real life and not with abstract themes. It begins with the pupil's point of view and leads him to larger conceptions and correlations. The circle of experience is thus enlarged and enriched, as he moves forward from the imperfect to the more perfect, from the crude to the mature, from the known to the unknown. Every new idea is tested out in life and thus the culture of character is acquired. The impression finds expression and the theory is related to practice. For instance, the parable of the good Samaritan should lead the scholars to

behave in true neighborly fashion worthy of Jesus Christ. The value of the Bible as the greatest book of religion should induce them to prove it for themselves in their special sphere of life. It is not enough to secure their approval of what was done by the Good Samaritan and have them complacent over anti-social and anti-racial practices in their own community. That would be like passing a set of resolutions and taking no action on them. Do you call this pragmatic? Whatever the name it is in accord with the teaching of Jesus who said: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The problem in teaching is how to make connections between what is taught and its application. This is the difference between education which draws out the best in a pupil, and exhortation which expects the pupil to surrender without further discussion. The first respects the personality of the student and encourages expression, the second disrespects it and insists on repression. The first makes for development and initiative, the second for a static and passive type of life, which is always uncertain of itself and weakly dependent on others. The first encourages the cultivation of the Christian consciousness as the privilege of Protestantism, the second makes much of authority of the dogmatic order, and

compels one to be guided by decisions made without regard to special conditions. Is it not true, as Professor Johnston Ross says that "religious stimulation by exhortation has been hugely overdone"? In referring to Coleridge's incessant talk, Carlyle once observed: "To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into can in the long run be exhilarating to no creature, how eloquent soever the flood of utterance that is descending." The secret of good teaching then is coöperation between the teacher and the pupil, between what is taught and what is practiced, between what is understood and what is done.

The personal contact is what finally counts. This is all the more significant since an investigation showed that the average Protestant youth receives during the year about twenty-four hours of formal religious teaching, as compared with the Jewish youth who receives one hundred and eighty hours, and the Roman Catholic youth who is given four hundred and eighty hours. Whatever these figures may mean or not mean, it is evident that the responsibility ultimately rests upon the teacher to induce the scholars to become acquainted with Jesus Christ, to commit their lives to him, and to show by Christlike behavior that they are his faithful followers. This is to be done by creating a Christian experience

that comports with the personality and needs of each scholar, and not by transmitting an experience which is as much of a misfit as a suit of clothes obtained without measurements. "Platitudinous and sentimental religious education" is satisfied with conventional piety which is as effete as it is ineffective. It lacks the determination of education to secure culture and restraint by self-knowledge, self-reverence and self-control, in harmony with the highest and best ideals. It also lacks the dynamic of evangelism which offers the spiritual and moral resources of Jesus Christ for the achievement of life's noblest ends. When education and evangelism are wedded to each other by the creative Spirit of Christ there will be enjoyed that progressive experience "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

"Let Knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster." [27]

[27] Read *What Is Christian Education?* by George A. Coe (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York).

CHAPTER TWELVE

PREACHER AND PASTOR

THE unrest of our day is disturbing and distracting but it is a sign of life and not of death. The only place that has the dignity of rest is the cemetery. The interrogation point looms large in our midst. Doubt and dismay are found by the side of rebellion and retaliation. Ancient landmarks are treated with mistrust and suspicion. Standards accepted with pious reverence by a former day are discarded with captious callousness. Considerations of expediency are resented as the counsels of evasiveness. Attempts to lash moribund methods into activity are looked upon as quixotic enterprises. The voice of authority which issues mandates in the accents of the past falls upon deaf or indifferent ears. The appeal to walk in the way of the fathers is treated by their sons as a confession of ineptitude. The pleas for patience are accepted as a feint of those who postpone the courageous facing of difficulties in the vain expectation that time would automatically remove them. The dismal outlook of Speng-

ler the Occidental and of Tagore the Oriental is due to jaundiced vision which does not see that creative thought has always arisen from discontent and criticism. They who meet uncertainty and disquiet with declamations confiscate their rights to leadership because of the unavoidable impression that they are uttering platitudes and not convictions. Equally futile are denunciations which rend the air with hysterical shrieks, as though the Ark of God was in peril and something must be quickly done to save it from vandals. It is antiquated twaddle to call a halt and face about, just as absurd as Gandhi's eulogy of the hand-loom for India. Whatever may be said about "the dogma of progress," it is neither delusion nor self-complacency to insist that the only alternative is to go forward.

A careful inquiry into the situation shows that the insistent questioning of everything is by no means a veiled conspiracy to dismiss the inheritance of the past without costs. It is not a conflict between the old and the new from the standpoint of chronology. It is rather a clash between the real and the apparent, between the actual and the imaginary, between the ethical and the conventional, between the spiritual and the theological, between the practical and the theoretical. This fact is understood by the pastor

who visits in the basements and attics on the side streets, and in the homes of those who live in greater comfort on the avenues. Nor is there much difference between the village, the suburb and the city, so far as the perplexities and needs of people are concerned. It may be that the villager is more hostile to change, and disguises his inability to consider unfamiliar aspects of truth with assertive declarations that the old is better than the new. It may be that the suburbanite is more sophisticated, and camouflages his confusion by assuming the airs of superiority. It may be that the city man is more hospitable to progressive ideas, and covers his superficiality with a tolerance which is akin to indifference. In spite of these differences which are geographical and environmental, they all feel the same pressure of insufficiency and incompleteness although these may be expressed differently. Dean Inge was correct up to a certain point when he said that "the modern town dweller has no God and no devil; he lives without awe, without admiration, without fear." This is equally true of those who live elsewhere.

What do we actually find behind the scenes? On every hand there are met lives hunted by guilt, distressed by disappointments, harassed by opposition, depressed by misunderstanding, non-

plussed by diffidence, overwhelmed by sorrow, handicapped by prejudice. The attitude of many of these is suspicious and rebellious, captious and cynical, hard and bitter. Others are perplexed about truth, querulous and dissatisfied because they have little to fall back upon and less to look forward to, suffering from a divided self which intensifies their mental confusion, heart languish and anxiety of spirit, whose dreary lives are like a treadmill tantalizingly monotonous. There is a variety of causes for this disintegrated personality, such as the struggles with poverty, the disillusionments of unemployment, the shocks of sorrow, the hopelessness of incurable disease which is a strain upon the sufferer and those dear to him, the incisive subtlety of temptation, the collapse of inherited moral standards and religious beliefs, domestic infelicities, nervous tensions, social misfits and misadventures. Causes and effects are so inextricably mixed up that analysis and reintegration are complicated in the effort to deal sympathetically with the perversions and subtleties which disturb and distort so many lives. A fine illustration of how this might be done is found in *Answers to Everyday Questions* by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman.

Let us guard against rushing to wrong conclusions in saying that these difficulties are

mainly psychological. The intellectualist as such touches only a small segment of life for only a minority is interested in questions in the abstract. More people are troubled by what Bishop Henson calls "a chronic incapacity to realize what they believe." This bears upon individual and social adjustments which are practicable as we frankly reckon with the whole life of the individual in the entire context of relationships. Psychology is not a substitute for religion but a help towards the interpretation of life's complexes and the best means by which religion might integrate the divided personality. A balanced and harmonious life is possible by establishing right relationship with God, with self and with our fellows. This is best provided by the Gospel of Christ, but in many instances it is ineffective, not because of its inadequacy but because of a lack of vision and understanding in applying its remedial measures to particular individuals. A main qualification is the ability to read character, so as to discern between the real and the apparent, and distinguish genuine from imposed motives, and separate latent uncertainties from pathological states, and thus get at the actual seat of the trouble. This is by no means an easy task but it is the privilege and responsibility of the pastor, whose chief business it is to

guide those in distress to the experience of deliverance. Such a pastor also proves to be a timely preacher, whose pulpit and pastoral work helps to build up Christian character, to introduce the right atmosphere into his church and to make the church the redemptive agency for individual and social salvation. This task is severely complex because the temper of our age has "replaced moral dignity by pleasure and what were often the sanctions of the eternal with the passing subjectivities of time." Indeed, it is this subjectivism which has produced the obsessions of abnormal individualism, as might easily be illustrated by the erratic and eccentric actions of church people, not to speak of others. These are the difficulties which sorely perplex the pastor-preacher but they can be met and overcome with a growing personal experience of companionship with Christ, as he enters with sympathy and insight into the baffling circumstances of others, and points them to the source of all recovery through the Creative Spirit of God.

One serious criticism of the modern pulpit is that it is answering questions which nobody is asking. The preaching does not "cog in with the needs of the people." It is doubtless better in technique than that of an earlier day but it fails to come to grips with the man in the pew. "To

the prophets preaching was no mere display, but a sore battle with the hard hearts of their contemporaries, in which the messenger of the Lord worked with the pity of his weakness upon him, at a supreme cost to himself and conscious that he must summon to his desperate task every resource of feeling and of art." [28] This is always so. It is the intensity and directness here implied that modern preaching lacks because it is so largely out of vital touch with the people to whom it is addressed. This defect can be measurably remedied by the preacher with pastoral contacts and in a face-to-face ministry which diagnoses motives, analyzes emotions, interprets desires and directs his hearers to the fullness of satisfaction in Christ. Such a preacher is creative and constructive. His criticism expresses appreciation rather than denunciation, and he is earnestly personal without indulging in personalities. It is ever true that, "The pastoral engagement is the essential thing; all else, even the glorious proclamation of the Gospel, comes within that environment."

The cure of souls certainly demands most exacting qualifications. It is a ministry of mental and spiritual healing. Notice how the miracles

[28] George Adam Smith: *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, p. 281 (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

of Jesus had regard for the physical and the psychical, and recall what St. Paul wrote about the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. There are dangers associated with such a ministry especially when undertaken by enthusiasts with a smattering of knowledge. It is a task for mature men who handle cases with patient sympathy, appreciative candor, tactful courtesy, emotional detachment and profound reverence for every individual. This is the more necessary since those who need self-enlightenment are unusually and even morbidly sensitive, and need an atmosphere that radiates friendliness and kindness. The pastor needs what might be called the gift of clairvoyance to perceive sagaciously what is behind the haltingly confessional speech of the inquirer so as to suggest a cure. He will doubtless use psychology, as has already been mentioned, to understand the inhibitions, conflicts, failures. But after psychoanalysis has laid bare the difficulties it is religion which can resolve the conflicts, unify the divided self, reinforce the will for the achievement of personality. A recent reply to a questionnaire sent to four hundred and sixty-six ministers gave pastoral calling the first place among thirteen activities of the church. Preaching is the climax of the minister's business, and Protestantism rightly regards it as a

sacrament. We certainly need a worshipful atmosphere in our church services but the increasing tendency towards ritual and liturgy needs to be watched, in view of some churches which have elaborate forms of worship without the fires of faith which through worship makes us conscious of God, the sublime Spiritual Reality. The strength of the church is not found in the practices of ritualism but in the vibrant preaching of redemption in its manifold aspects, as I have pointed out in previous chapters. The foundation for such preaching is to be laid by the cooperative enterprise between the preacher and his people in the manysided pastoral relationship.

The church has a specific mission which was well described by Principal James Denney with conviction. "All life has to be Christianized; but the process is to be accomplished, not by dragging everything under the scrutiny and sentence of the church as it exists among us, but by sending out into all the departments of life men to live and work there in the Spirit of Christ. . . . The church does nothing unless it does the deepest things; it does nothing unless it prevails on sinful men to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in love as he loved us. Let us fix our minds on this as the first

and supreme interest, and everything else will come out in its proper place." [29] A comparison between the prophets of old and the modern preacher is far-fetched. To begin with, the preacher is at the head of a complex organization and he cannot in the nature of the case be a peripatetic free lance like these prophets. He is a minister and a business executive, and the two cannot be separated even when a division of labor assigns certain forms of work to the laity. The oracular utterances on a few relevant themes befitted the Old Testament seers who spoke in times of grave crisis. The minister of a church who conceives this to be his primary burden has misunderstood his vocation. His work is more comprehensive as a teacher of religion, who instructs and guides his people in season and out of season, so that they become what Principal L. P. Jacks calls "unauthorized versions" of Christianity in their community. This is the type of pastoral evangelism which the church and the world needs if all life is to be Christianized. Truly there is nothing more worthy of the pastor-preacher and of his people, and nothing which will more readily commend the church to our ambiguous age. No negation of historian nor

[29] Quoted by A. Boyd Scott: *Preaching Week by Week*, p. 229 (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

pessimism of philosopher nor cynicism of sceptic can withstand the joyful testimony of living witnesses, who demonstrate by word and deed that they know Jesus Christ who is the Gospel of God.

In the final analysis the pastor-preacher is the outstanding representative of religion, and he must mediate its influence through the people whom he rallies to the cause of Christ and the church. The burning heart is his greatest asset. It gives the tone to everything. It is the secret of buoyance, joyance and endurance in the midst of life's drift and decadence. It imparts ability to move men and women, not only the worldly and careless but also those who are at ease in Zion, whose self-complacency is a mark of their shallow self-sufficiency. To stir these latter, to get them out of their ruts, to make them cease quibbling and quarreling, to have them realize the adventuresomeness of the Gospel, to lead them to experience the rapture and thrill of the life hid with Christ in God, to encourage them to undertake difficult tasks, to make the flowers of faith, hope and love bloom in midwinter—these things can be done only as he has unction and passion from the ever blessed Trinity.

These are trying days for the preacher and

the church. But if we are sure of God, strong in Christ, controlled by the Spirit, happy in our Christian Fellowship, we need take odds from no sources. Let us keep at our work with lighted lamps and girded loins, and let us contend to the uttermost until all mankind shall come into the communion of pardon, purity and peace.

"Be Thou our present joy O Lord,
Who wilt be ever our reward;
And, as the countless ages flee,
May all our glory be in Thee." [30]

[30] Read *Psychology and Religious Experience,* by W. Fearon Halliday (Richard R. Smith, Inc., New York).

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